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All ...ticulturalists Now? — p. 51

How the UN Welches on America

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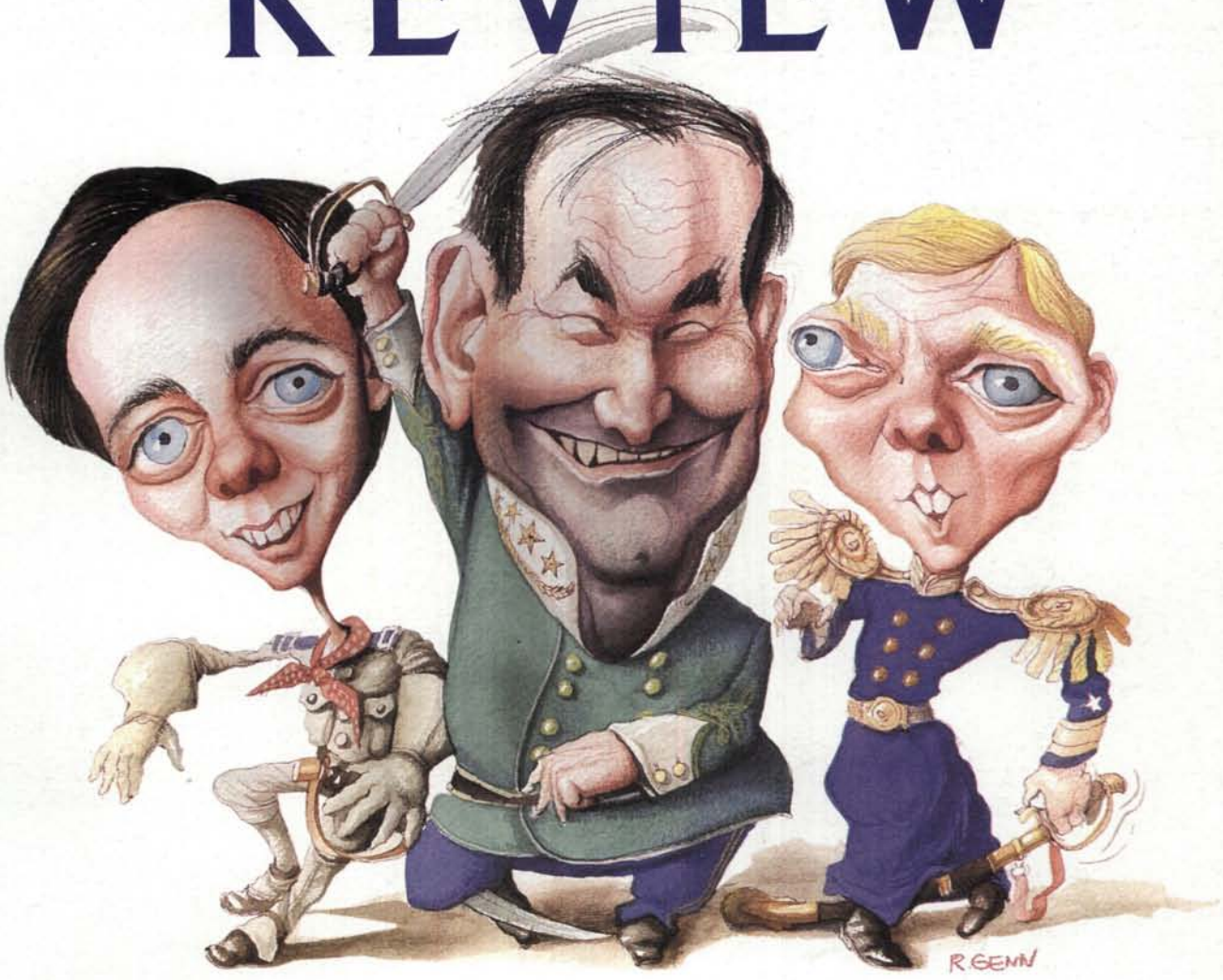

The Anti-China Syndrome

Owen Harries, Peter W. Rodman, Ramesh Ponnuru

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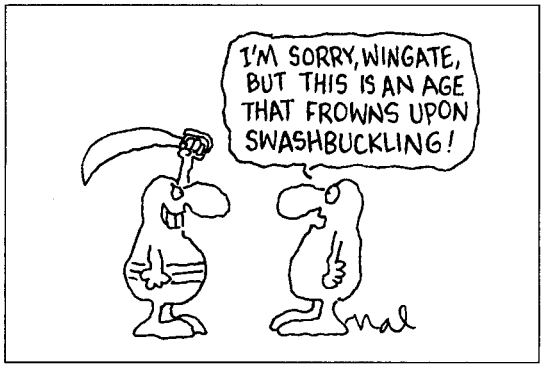

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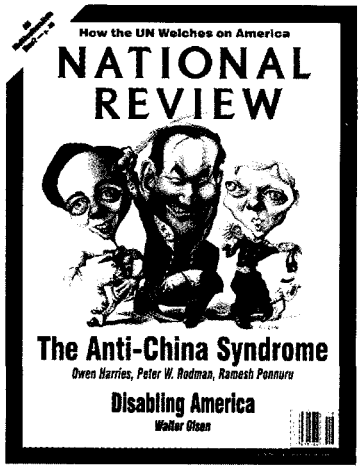

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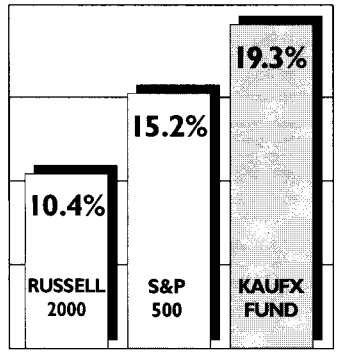

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FROM THE EDITOR

Lux et Veritas

■ An occasional nightmare: I am walking into a favorite bar when other regulars rush out past me, one saying: "I just can't hear about that damned 'Manchurian Candidates' cover one more time."

Well, sorry, but the story keeps growing. The letters page in this issue allows leading executives in the ethnic-grievance industry to have their say. But their campaign has already borne fruit. At Yale last week I was assaulted by a howling mob of honors students who pulled at my clothes, struck the odd blow (no cause for concern—not even my pride was hurt), waved placards, and shouted loudly a few inches from my face: "We demand respect."

Quite what they sought to accomplish was not clear—maybe, like Red Guards in the Cultural Revolution, they hoped to make me put on a dunce's cap and admit deviations from multiculturalism.

We at *NR*, however, do not kowtow—not even to the young. Anyway, they had forgotten the Yale police—who suddenly appeared and hustled me to a waiting car through the mini-mob, which hammered on the car until we drove away—back to tranquil New York and a reviving glass of champagne.

It was not the cartoon, however, but our refusal to apologize for it which seemed to arouse the most vehement indignation. Why? Let us remember that the Yale rioters are victims of a good education. They have been told from first grade on that America is really a racist society—and that any slights they have met on the road to Yale can be traced back to this hidden malignity. When racism emerges openly, it must be confronted and apologized for.

This world-view is false. White racism exists, but its social power is weak and the social power arrayed against it is overwhelming. Most setbacks that beset Asians on the road to Yale are the results of life itself, or of *anti*-racism (e.g., quotas restricting Asians to help other minorities), or of the *absence* of racism (e.g., Asian women dating white men and leaving Asian men aggrieved).

When a world-view is false, it can be sustained only by constant reinforcement. Hence the liberal psychodramas that erupt from time to time in which racism is uncovered, the guilty apologize, and sensitivity training is imposed. Most recently, a former Texaco executive was accused of employing racial slurs, the company admitted guilt, the executive's pension was cancelled, Texaco paid out millions in tribute—and editorialists reminded us that white racism still dominated corporate America.

The discovery that no racial slurs had in fact been used did not alter the course of this psychodrama in the slightest. In the larger social picture one can be guilty of racism even when proved innocent. Indeed, a guilty verdict may then be especially important, to allay suspicions that the general world-view has flaws.

NR's caricature was plainly innocent of racism. But our refusal to apologize to the ethnic-grievance industry undermines its shakily maintained orthodoxy that white racism governs all. And when an orthodoxy is threatened by a truth, then the orthodox beat down the doubt in their hearts by beating down the heretic in their midst.

■ Among the headlines on the Yale incident: MAGAZINE OFFENDS ASIANS (*New Haven Register*), NATIONAL REVIEW EDITOR INSPIRES MINI-RIOT AFTER YALE SPEECH (*Stamford Advocate*), and NATIONAL REVIEW EDITOR *SAYS* YALE STUDENTS ASSAULTED HIM (AP, my italics). The students' assault and my "racism" are apparently moral equivalents.

How might this story have played if I were—how shall I put it?—more *simpatico*? Maybe: HATE CRIME AT YALE. IMMIGRANT ATTACKED BY MOB "OVER CARTOON." RIGHTS GROUPS FEAR "CHILLING EFFECT." Or am I being oversensitive?

■ And the ethnic-grievance executives are still asking *me* to apologize. Make the effort, gentlemen, and say you're sorry. You'll feel all the better for it.

—JOHN O'SULLIVAN

NATIONAL REVIEW

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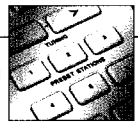

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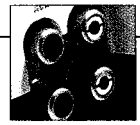

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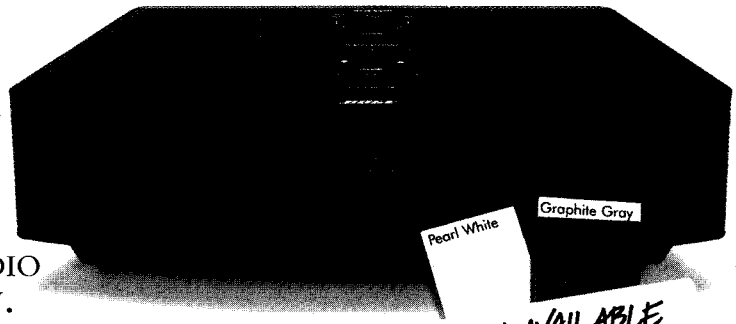

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FOR THE RECORD

■ **Dick Morris** doubts **Bill Clinton** would have arranged hush money for **Webster Hubbell**. According to Morris, "Clinton's mindset is one of total denial" about the seriousness of the scandals surrounding him: "He's too much into denial on one hand and too much of an ingrate on the other." . . . Asked what President Clinton could do to help get his ex-wife **Susan McDougal** out of jail on contempt charges, **James McDougal** says: "Perhaps he could go ahead and advise her to answer the question. . . . Tell Susan to honestly answer the question. Take the consequences if it hurts you, Mr. President, but let this innocent woman out of jail." . . . New ABC talking head **George Stephanopoulos** gets subpoena from House Committee for information relating to Asian-American moneyman **Johnny Chung**. . . . As **Al Gore** continues to get hurt by fundraising scandals, House Minority Leader **Dick Gephardt** gears up for presidential run. Says Morris: "Gephardt is running for President and has basically abandoned the notion of leading the House; all he's doing is trying to position himself in the race for President." . . . House Minority Whip **David Bonior**, meanwhile, leaning toward Gephardt for 2000, takes shot across Gore's bow: "Are we simply going to go to China, stay silent, and raise a glass for signing a couple of contracts that will do little to affect our $40-billion trade deficit?" . . . The more things change, the more they stay the same: then-Democratic strategist **Mike McCurry** said in March 1992, "If I was on the Clinton staff, I would say we have one problem, and one problem only: People don't think we're honest enough to be President."

■ In instance of interest-group politics gone haywire, black women oppose moving statue of three female suffragists into the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol. Feminists had agitated to move a 13-ton statue of **Elizabeth Cady Stanton**, **Susan B. Anthony**, and **Lucretia Mott**—informally known as "Three Ladies in a Bathtub"—from its exile in the Crypt of the U.S. Capitol at a cost of $80,000. But the National Political Congress of Black Women now balks at relocation, scheduled for June, because statue doesn't include black nineteenth-century feminist **Sojourner Truth**. . . . Media Research Center points out that Speaker **Newt Gingrich** gets unusual sympathy from **Katie Couric** when the NBC personality interviews Gingrich critic Rep. **Peter King** (R., N.Y.): "But in fairness, what is wrong with Newt Gingrich reaching out to some other groups, extending himself? I mean, can't you catch more flies with honey? Isn't there something about that? And perhaps the rigidity of some of the conservative Republicans and their almost religious adherence to the Contract with America, didn't that ultimately backfire on them?"

■ In a blow to Federal Election Commission, Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals says the agency must pay the legal fees of the Christian Action Network. In attempt to crack down on issue advocacy, FEC had unsuccessfully sued CAN over a 1992 anti-gay-rights TV ad. . . . Sen. **Mitch McConnell** (R., Ky.), leading opponent of so-called campaign-finance reform, labels **McCain–Feingold** bill "dead meat." . . . Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee head **Martin Frost** sent $2.7 million of DCCC money to his home state of Texas, more than twice the amount received by any other state. Frost sent more money home than Sen. **Al D'Amato** (R., N.Y.), who has been harshly criticized for steering Senate GOP campaign funds to New York. . . . Ethics and Public Policy Center announces that Blackwell Corp. head **Neal B. Freeman**—a long-time member of *NR*'s board—will become vice chairman of its board.

Matt—Rothco

"Get a job? And risk overheating the economy? No thank you."

■ **Tony Blair**, British Labour Party's leader, and hence next Prime Minister if Labour wins general election May 1, embraces **Margaret Thatcher**'s privatization program, including air-traffic control and parts of the mail service, in order to meet constraints designed to balance the budget . . . . French political parties are gearing up for a snap parliamentary election, which Pres. **Jacques Chirac** is expected to call for May or June, nine months ahead of schedule. Chirac hopes to benefit from a series of privatization steps, although ultra-conservative **Jean-Marie Le Pen** is expected to take 20 per cent of the vote on the immigration issue. . . . Pres. **Boris Yeltsin** has ordered Russian government officials to sell their foreign cars and replace them with Volga limousines. . . . **Princess Diana** beats out her ex-husband again, this time on *The Sunday Times* list of Britain's richest 1,000 people. Diana got most of her stash from **Prince Charles** in their divorce settlement. The prince doesn't even appear on the list.

■ Department of Unsolicited Testimonials: *Newsweek* reports that one of the TV shows that Heaven's Gate cultists were allowed to watch was **Ken Burns**'s documentary on **Thomas Jefferson**. . . . In the lyrics to his latest song, Rapper **Ice-T** (famous for his 1992 ballad "Cop Killer") takes after **O. J. Simpson**: "How do you plead? Uh, uh, not guilty? Wait a minute, not guilty? What are you talking about? You got a bloody glove, bloody car, bloody knife, bloody carpet, bloody sock, bloody hand." . . . *Friends* executive producer **Marta Kauffman**, despite coming-out episode of *Ellen*, complains of puritan back-sliding on television: "Things have changed over the past few years. You couldn't do the masturbation episode of *Seinfeld* today."

■ Speaker Gingrich sheds 14 pounds. Gingrich explained to a group in Cobb County, Ga., why his leadership model of "vision, strategy, projects, tactics," hadn't been working when it came to weight loss. "For years I had a vision of myself as a slim, fairly athletic person," Gingrich said. "I had a tactic of drinking Guinness."

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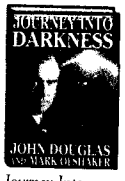

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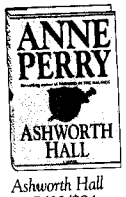

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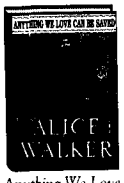

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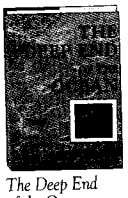
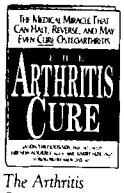


The Deep End of the Ocean
65-2455/$23.95



The Arthritis Cure
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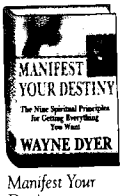
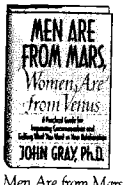


Manifest Your Destiny
90-4448/$23

You Can Make It Happen
95-7371/$23



Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus
61-3804/$20

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11-4828/$24

Alias Grace
75-2817/$24.95

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36-0182/$30

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32-4028/$21.95

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65-0720/$27.50

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25-2724/$25

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45-0751*/$37.45

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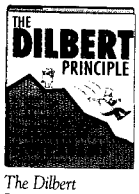
65-2832/$23.95



The Dilbert Principle
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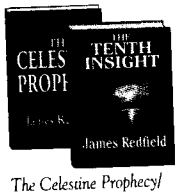

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LETTERS

Following is a selection from the roughly four hundred e-mail messages, letters, faxes, and phone calls we have received about our "Manchurian Candidates" cover of March 24.

Of the Same Opinion

I am writing to protest your magazine's recent depiction of the Clintons in grotesque buckteeth and stereotypical garb and Al Gore in an apparent monk's outfit.

Cynthia Mark
Cambridge, Mass.

I am writing in response to a recent cover of NATIONAL REVIEW, which depicts Bill and Hillary Clinton in grotesque buckteeth and stereotypical garb and Al Gore in an apparent monk's outfit. This is an ignorant action on your behalf which perpetuates stereotypes, misconceptions, and divisions among our American people. It is a disgusting insult to all Asian-Americans . . .

Michelle Cheuk
Wellesley, Mass.

This is in regard to the cover depicting Bill and Hillary Clinton in grotesque buckteeth and stereotypical garb and Al Gore in an apparent monk's outfit. This is not only an obvious insult to Asian-Americans but also to all Americans.

Sahba Rouhani
Chicago, Ill.

NATIONAL REVIEW has a cover depicting Bill Clinton and Hillary Clinton in grotesque buckteeth and stereotypical garb and Al Gore in an apparent monk's outfit. I find it not only poor taste but disgustingly insulting to all Asian-Americans. After O.J., Rodney King, etc., I would have expected increased minority sensitivity.

Kwong Chew
Grass Valley, Calif.

The cover depicting Bill Clinton and Hillary Clinton in grotesque buckteeth and stereotypical garb and Al Gore in an apparent monk's outfit is a disgusting insult to me and to all Asian-Americans. We deserve an apology from NATIONAL REVIEW!

Eric Tao
Port Washington, N.Y.

The cover depicting Bill and Hillary Clinton in grotesque buckteeth and stereotypical garb and Al Gore in an apparent monk's outfit is a disgusting insult to all Asian-Americans!!

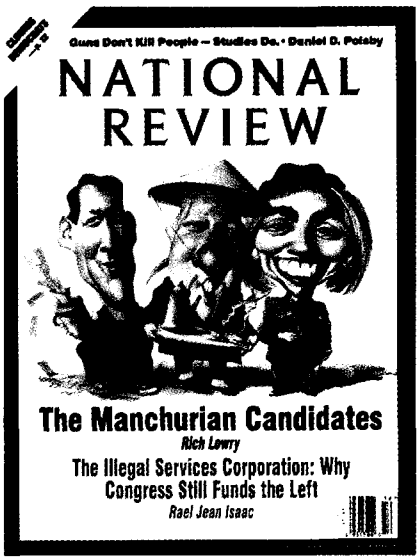
Jacqueline Chan Valencic
San Jose, Calif.

I found the cover art which depicts Bill Clinton and Hillary Clinton in grotesque buckteeth and stereotypical garb and Al Gore in an apparent monk's outfit a disgusting insult to all Asian-Americans.

Sue Ram
Santa Clara, Calif.

I haven't even seen the cover and I'm offended.

Margaret Simmons
phone call from N.Y.


Guns Don't Kill People — Studies Do. • Daniel D. Polsby
NATIONAL REVIEW
The Manchurian Candidates
Rich Lowry
The Illegal Services Corporation: Why Congress Still Funds the Left
Rael Jean Isaac

Concerned

I write on behalf of the Asian Pacific American Lawyers Association of New Jersey, Inc., to condemn the derogatory cover featuring an unflattering depiction of the Clintons as Asians, complete with buckteeth and Chinese coolies' garb. This image reinforces a widely held negative stereotype of Asians and serves to fuel an anti-Asian Pacific American sentiment in this country, particularly in the current political climate, in which allegations made against a select number of Asian contributors appear to have been imputed to other Americans of Asian Pacific descent. APALA/NJ demands an apology now to all Asian Pacific Americans.

Donna C. Chin
Newark, N.J.

We are writing to lend our support to the concerns already raised by the National Asian Pacific Legal Consortium, the Organization of Chinese Americans, and other Asian-American groups over your cover depicting President and Mrs. Clinton and Vice President Gore as stereotypical Asian caricatures. While it is certainly within your rights to criticize the Clinton Administration for their fundraising ethics, using such caricatures is offensive to your readers. In addition, John O'Sullivan's flippant way of dismissing these concerns in the *Washington Post* ("They have not a snowball's chance in hell of an apology") simply adds insult to injury, rather than encouraging a constructive dialogue.

Abraham H. Foxman
Anti-Defamation League
New York, N.Y.

Pacific Overtures

Though *NR*'s line on immigration occasionally makes me wince, I guffawed at this cover. The objections raised by professional Asians (of American citizenship) are disingenuous. The leadership of Asian-American groups has shamelessly provided cover for the Clinton Administration's policies, though they are typically at odds with their rank-and-file members. What should offend Asian-Americans is the notion that they share a common ancestry with that Gang of Three so fittingly depicted on *NR*'s cover! Such a common ancestry is as accurate as the truly offensive and fictitious identity of interests and beliefs these Asian-American elites manufacture about a group that on the national level votes Republican more than virtually any other demographic group. But you'll never hear that aspect of American identity touted by these Asian-American apologists for the Clinton Administration's liberalism.

Ken Masugi
Colorado Springs, Colo.

As a Chinese immigrant, I strongly disagree with Asian activists who charged that the cover "smacks of racism." I have shown it to other Chinese Americans; no one yet has found the cartoon offensive. The drawing shows Hillary Clinton with buckteeth—well, the First Lady *has* big teeth, and it is only normal for caricaturists to exaggerate their characters' features. I am writing to warn your readers and Americans in general that the self-appointed Asian activists promoting immigration and welfare do not represent many Asian-Americans. A case in point is that they vigorously promote welfare to legal immigrants, while 69 per cent of Asian voters in California favor limiting those on welfare to benefits for only two years. I urge ethnic activists to stop intim-

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idating Americans with false charges of racism.

Yeh Ling-Ling
Orinda, Calif.

We, as Asian-Americans, should be ashamed of ourselves for defending a President who doesn't care about our people or our concerns. Clinton continues to do business with Communist China, the number-one killer of its citizens in the world, while simultaneously advocating human rights. It pains me to see the dependency many people have on this President and his Administration, and their ignorance toward it. The issue of *NR* and its cover isn't one of racism, but one of morality—which this Administration lacks.

Rosemary Yu
New York, N.Y.

As a conservative eight-year subscriber to *NR*, #1 fan of WFB, #1 fan of Kate O'Beirne, and, most importantly, a Chinese-American, I support *NR* wholeheartedly over the Manchurian Candidates flap. Not only did the Clintons take money from the Communist Chinese, but they tried to play the race card to hide it.

Albert Cheng
Dallas, Tex.

Peace Breaks Out

We were dismayed to see NATIONAL REVIEW's cover illustration that presented broad and damaging images of Asians. When it is used wisely and responsibly, caricature can illuminate, amuse, and inform. In this case, the illustration preys on the unflattering stereotypes of one community and paints it as a group deserving of ridicule and derision. Whatever point the magazine meant to make, it did so at the considerable expense of people of Asian descent. By running the caricature, the magazine does immeasurable offense to this community and to readers who cherish civility, respect, and tolerance in American society.

Eleanor Lazarus, Chair
Jeffrey Weintraub, Director
The American Jewish Committee's
Center for American Pluralism
Washington, D.C.

The reality in our society is that some Americans are more likely to be victims of prejudice and stereotyping than others. Your decision to run the caricature was insensitive at best, but to wonder why it offended Asian-Americans is simply callous.

Asian-Americans are not alone in their outrage. Most Americans who belong to an ethnic, racial, or religious minority have known the dread of guilt by association. We know how it feels to have one's loyalty questioned because of some political crisis. And we certainly know the power of the media to fan society's embers of prejudice and intolerance when it is not vigilant.

Helen Hatab Samhan
Arab American Institute
Washington, D.C.

Deconstructive Criticism

Dear Irish Drunk/Dumbsh— John O'Sullivan, would you imbeciles please attack Bill Clinton in some other way besides making racist drawings? I found your cover to be extremely racist and uncalled for.

Ian Christopher Taylor
rwreagan@hotmail.com

John O'Sullivan is such a clueless idiot. He's some fat a— CEO wearing Armani, I bet. Too bad he doesn't know that what is on the Net can cause so many hits it could f— up his pathetic life. Ever wonder how people transfer your money without you even noticing, Mr. O'Sullivan? Ever wonder how people get your Social Security number and make you seem dead?

anonymous
rai@hotmail.com

We just saw the arrogant man responsible for NATIONAL REVIEW's cover on the *Today* show [March 21]. His insensitivity and lack of compassion for any other opinion than his own was abominable. This man needs a 1997 reality check.

Rob and Milda
humphery@earthlink.net

Not only is your cover incredibly offensive to everyone of every race who has seen it, but your representatives act like two-year-old spoiled brats on national TV. You are humiliating this entire country with your cruel, low-class behavior.

Lynn McQueen
lmcqueen@email.unc.edu

I would like to assure Mr. O'Sullivan that he, indeed, is a bona fide racist. If he cannot see the racist implications of the cover and the insulting references to negative and hurtful stereotypes of Chinese, he is either blind (not likely), ignorant (again, not likely), or pandering to people's basest emotions in order to gain publicity. Oh, by the way, it's in bad taste to decide what's offensive to other folks. If a Chinese person says your cover is racist, who are you as a white man to say it's not?

Lorie L. Broomhall
Rkeech@star21.com

You f—ing racist bastards can rot in hell. May all of your mothers get raped and stabbed by giant chopsticks.

Tiffany Eng
tiffeng@ucla.edu

Ain't It the Truth

God bless John O'Sullivan! What a treat it was to see a right-winger actually stand his ground and take issue with his "victim."

Lyn R. Frates
YCRC46A@prodigy.com

I have a new hero and it is John O'Sullivan. I have been waiting a long time for someone to stand up to the sensitively challenged. Perhaps some of the spineless wonders who call themselves conservative leaders can take a page from his book.

Sadie Fields
Atlanta, Ga.

I am cheered that there's one person left on this earth who doesn't roll over and start beating his breast, whining "mea culpa" at a misguided and ludicrous charge of racism. Mr. O'Sullivan has made my day.

Emily L. Dangler
Unionville, Va.

I saw Mr. O'Sullivan in action on *Crossfire* [March 26]. To borrow a phrase from the other side: Right on! It's about time that someone had the courage to take on the racial shakedown artists. Especially after the Texaco debacle, his performance was like fresh water in the deepest Kalahari.

Tony DeFusco
Norristown, Pa.

Would anyone complain about a kilted, red-haired Clinton if the President had taken money from the Scottish government? Thank you for rejecting the double standard dominating our society.

William Wallace
Tzounie@pouch.com

Unsolicited Testimonial

I used to complain that NATIONAL REVIEW doesn't get the attention it deserves, and now it's getting attention when it doesn't deserve any! John O'Sullivan was excellent on the *Today* show. The "scandal" over the cover is completely ridiculous, manufactured by an elite ethnic lobby representing nothing but the Democratic Party for which it is so transparently flacking. It's disgusting to hear Daphne Kwok [of the Organization of Chinese Americans] make comparisons between your cover and the Japanese internment camps. Is her organization also bankrolled by Red China? She owes an apology not only to *NR* for her irresponsible accusations (and it was a nice touch for Mr. O'Sullivan to demand one so forthrightly!), but to all the Japanese-Americans who suffered fifty years ago. That's the real scandal.

John J. Miller
Center for Equal Opportunity
Washington, D.C.

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THE WEEK

■ Loudly let the trumpet bray! Tantara! Mr. Clinton announces to the media assembled that he'll hire ten thousand welfare recipients to work in the White House and in other federal offices. Instead of being on welfare, getting tax dollars for doing nothing much, now they'll be employed, getting tax dollars for doing nothing much.

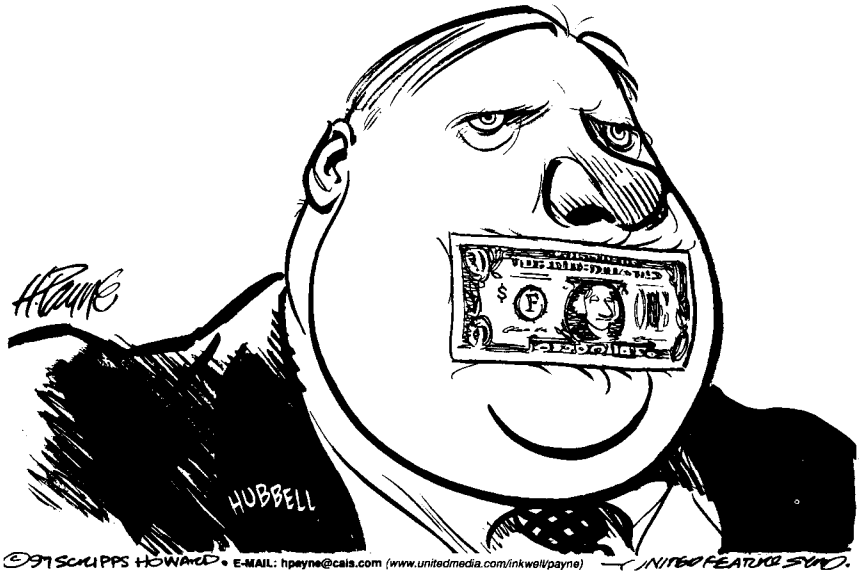
■ The next crisis ahead for Newt Gingrich is over how to pay the $300,000 assessment levied on him by the House ethics committee, ostensibly to reimburse it for its work on his case. It has become accepted wisdom in Washington that Mr. Gingrich must cough up his own money, even though the ethics committee has been silent on how he should pay, and traditionally politicians dip into campaign funds to cover such fines. Indeed, the only reason to depart from that practice is to impose as much personal pain on Mr. Gingrich as possible (and on his wife, Marianne, in whose name most of the couple's assets are kept). This is lousy politics, which will only notify all elected officials, present and future, that the potential price of their public service is financial ruin. As for Mr. Gingrich's tenure as Speaker—which is sure to be questioned again when the $300,000 bill comes due—that should depend on his ability to lead the House GOP Conference and advance conservative causes, not on his adherence to the latest punitive Beltway whim.

■ "All too many conservatives were passive during the segregation fight or candidly on the side of segregation," said Mr. Gingrich on a recent *Fox News Sunday*, explaining that legislation to curb affirmative action was not on his short-term agenda. True enough—though more Republicans than Democrats voted for the Civil Rights Act and there were respectable reasons for voting against it—but a curious logic. Because conservatives were wrong in not forcefully opposing racial preferences in the Fifties, Mr. Gingrich is going to abstain from forcefully opposing racial preferences today. Wrongly, in our eyes—and, since he admits that preferences are wrong, apparently in his too. Well, at least he's consistent.

■ Early hearings of Sen. Spencer Abraham's immigration subcommittee were devoted to biographies of successful immigrants in an attempt to demonstrate that unregulated immigration is good for the United States. Horatio Alger anecdotes, of course, tell us nothing about immigration's overall impact, and feel-good sessions cannot conceal the fact that Republican policy on immigration is in tatters. Last year the GOP leadership agreed that immigrants would continue to be admitted at an annual rate of about a million legally and 1.5 million all told, but that welfare benefits would not be available as inducements to immigration. This was endorsed by the Beltway Right with the slogan: Immigration good, welfare bad. What this calculation ignored was that such reform would merely transfer the problem of immigrant welfare to the states, give immigrants a mercenary motive to seek U.S. citizenship, and above all stimulate immigrant lobbies for higher welfare spending. Fast forward to the other day on Capitol Hill when "thousands" of elderly Russian and other immigrants lobbied for the restoration of federal SSI benefits—supported not only by the Clinton Administration but also by Governors George Pataki and George W. Bush. GOP leaders in Congress, having first resisted this pressure, now offer the states a $125-million subsidy to head off the more expensive SSI restoration. The camel's nose, they assure us, will be in the tent for only "a few years." The modest scale of this compromise should not obscure its dynamic: welfare stimulates immigration *and* immigration stimulates welfare. The policy of making immigration legal-but-unpleasant has failed.

■ Janet Reno announced, to those who have ears, that there is "no specific, credible evidence" that the Justice Department will pursue justice unless she is fired.

■ Last fall, when Al Gore called the GOP "just about a wholly owned subsidiary of the tobacco industry," the Democratic National Committee was collecting fat checks from cigarette companies and giving them to state parties, to avoid mention in Federal Election Commission reports. "They preferred that [the money] go to the state organizations," R. J. Reynolds spokesman Maura Ellis told the *Washington Post* of the $500,000 her employer gave to four Democratic state parties and another party



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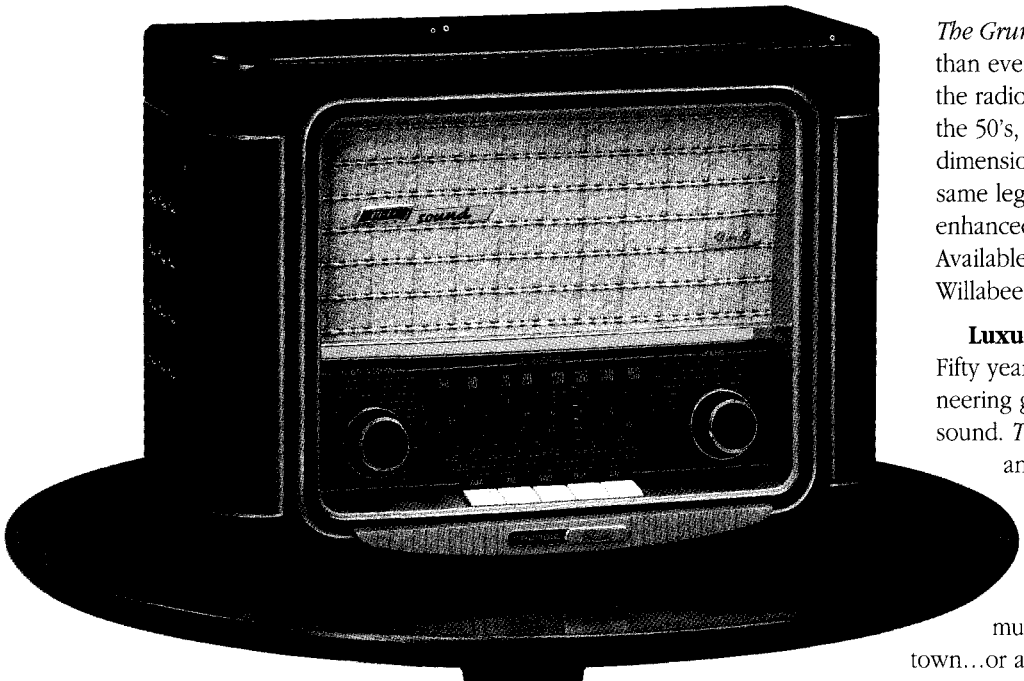
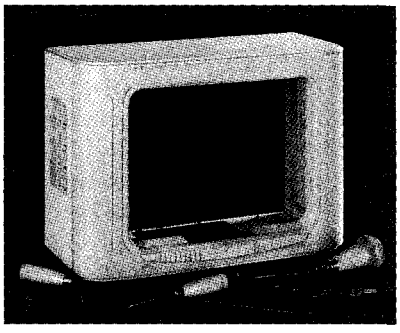


Radio shown smaller than actual size of 15¼" wide x 11" high x 6¼"deep. (Table not included.)



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committee; "that was their request." Philip Morris also paid its fair share, ponying up $100,000 divided among four state parties. No doubt that's the way Al Gore's sister would have wanted it.

■ Tiger Woods made golf history with his victory at the Masters, being the youngest player (at 21) to win the tournament, and breaking course records previously held by Jack Nicklaus and Raymond Floyd. For that, America has been gushing over him like grandparents over a new baby, and rightly so. But would the nation love him as much if he were . . . white? Tiger Woods is, as everyone knows by now, a mixture of American black, Thai, Chinese, and Cherokee. He is also delightfully poised, well spoken, polite, charming, the kind of young man who wears a red shirt to the Masters because his mother likes that color and "I always do what Mama says." He plays down his racial makeup with comments like "You guys sunburn more than I do, but that's about it." Now he is a superstar, neither because of his race nor despite it, but thanks to hard work, determination, and astonishing talent. That, along with all his other qualities, in this age of affirmative action and grotesque celebrity excess, makes him very unusual indeed. That's why America loves him. He proves that it can be done right.

■ Jerry Brown, whom we had forgotten, admits that his radio talk show is boring. No one was listening anyway, so how anyone found this out, we do not know.

■ Thornton Wilder joins Edward R. Murrow, George Meany, and blues guitarist Robert Johnson in the list of prominent dead Americans who have had their characteristic cigarettes or stogies twitched out of their mouths on postage stamps. The practice is literally Orwellian: one of Winston Smith's jobs in the Ministry of Truth was to eliminate inconvenient items from documents and photographs. Wait till they get to work on old movies.

■ Society Notes: Miss Tommie Wehrle, a luminary of the St. Louis real-estate set, will hold an "Ellen's Night Out" party with 15 of her "nearest and dearest" in honor of Ellen DeGeneres's "coming out" on her TV show April 30—"she's so courageous"—and, and, we cannot read on, it's time to turn on the Jerry Brown show.

Reno at the Mill

The upper millstone's grinding;
The lower follows suit.
The friction is horrendous,
But Janet's resolute.
The miller, Mr. Clinton,
Stays studiously mute.
Republicans keep booing.
Her headache is a beaut.

—W. H. von Dreele

The China Perplex

IT has been difficult these last few months for conservatives to get passionate about anything in domestic politics. Overthrowing a Communist dictatorship, however, is an inspiring cause. It was perhaps inevitable that conservative leaders would turn their thoughts abroad, in search of dragons to slay.

We do not doubt that China is a dragon. The anti-China lobby is right to object to the Administration's subservience to business interests in its dealings with Peking. President Clinton is not enforcing the McCain–Gore (yes, *that* Gore) anti-proliferation law, and even refers to China as a "former Communist" country. Accommodationists say that we shouldn't provoke China. Perhaps. Neither should we allow its rulers to think they have free rein.

Most conservatives agree on these points, but emotional debate has arisen over what follows from them. Conservative advocates of normal trade relations with China have been accused of free-market romanticism at best, shilling for big business at worst: in either case, they are said to have betrayed the moral principles of Ronald Reagan's foreign policy. They rightly retort that the urge to "export democracy" is Wilsonian, not Reaganite, and that the beginning of conservatism is the recognition that the world is not made of Play-Doh. Reshaping the world along democratic lines should begin with a smaller country than China—Somalia, say. But nobody in the intra-conservative debate is "pro-China" in the same sense that an influential sector of the Western intelligentsia was effectively pro-Soviet during the Cold War.

Our own view is that China is an authoritarian power today, rather than a totalitarian one—a distinction that used to be important to conservatives. It is, in any event, a markedly freer country than the one which Richard Nixon toasted as an ally. Its rapid proto-capitalist development is likely to have *some* political consequences —unpredictable perhaps, but more in the right than in the wrong direction. For these and other reasons, as Owen Harries powerfully argues, China is a potential enemy of the United States rather than an actual one. Our strategy to deal with China's rise must be geared toward these realities and the next forty years, not toward sloganeering in the elections of 1998 or 2000.

Our capacity to overthrow or modify the regime is anyway limited. Attempting to isolate China's economy is unlikely to advance either result. In the short term, trade restrictions would hurt the people we want to encourage: Chinese entrepreneurs, the people of Taiwan and Hong Kong (as well as American consumers). In the medium term, other countries would fill the vacuum. Even hawk-

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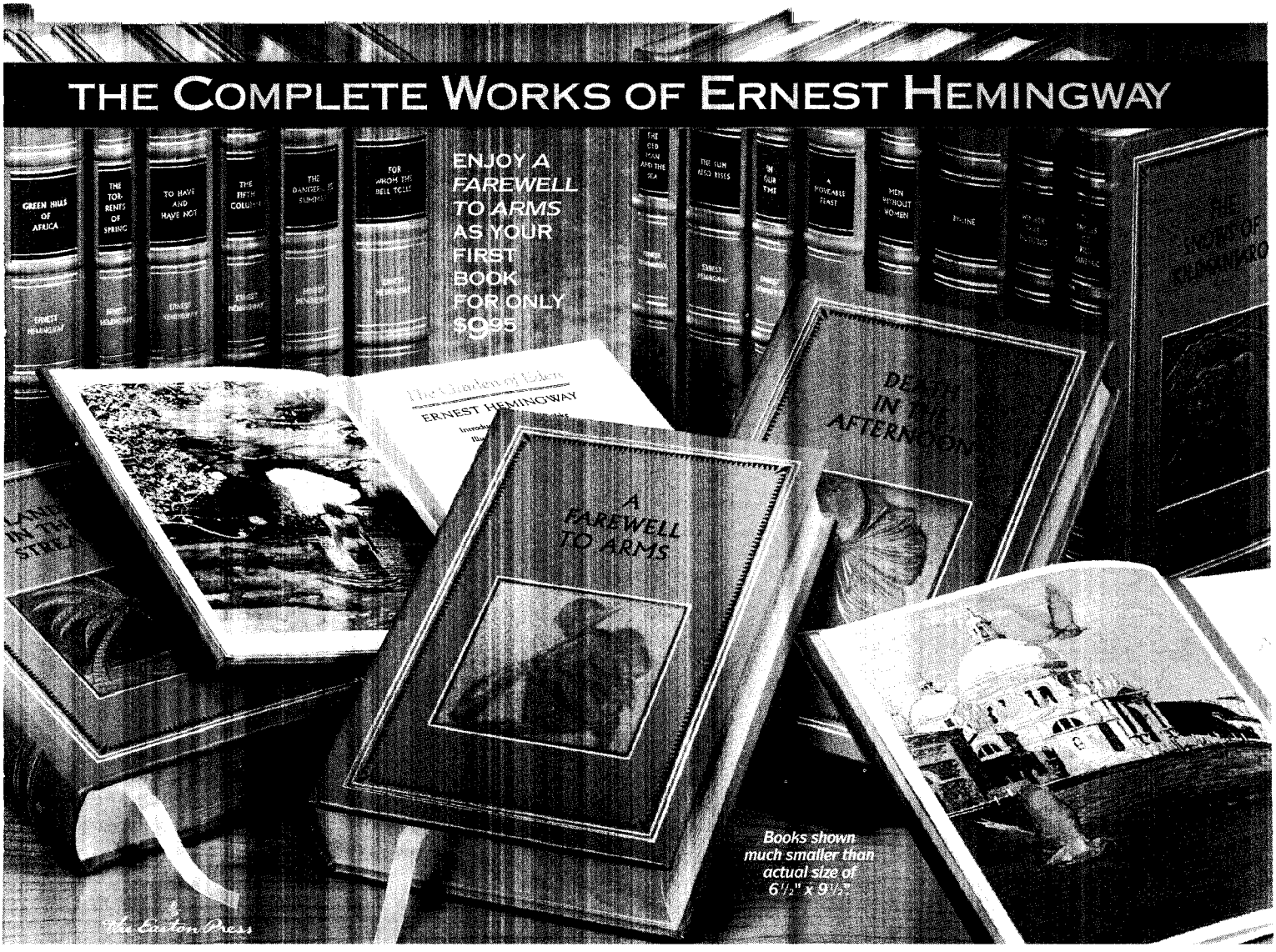

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ish advocates of ending "most-favored-nation" trading status have no notion of what to do with China afterward. A trade cut-off would be the sort of empty moral gesture beloved of liberals.

Instead, as Peter Rodman urges in this issue, we should adopt a policy of containment. The prerequisite for that policy is defense preparedness, which has slipped alarmingly under Mr. Clinton—and particularly missile defense. Our traditional allies must be brought on board too, so that a coordinated Western response greets any threats to freedom in Taiwan or Hong Kong. We may also need to rethink our Cold War hostility to India, which could prove a useful (and democratic) balance to China. And the U.S. should do all it can, officially and unofficially, to strengthen pro-freedom forces. This set of policies would advance our national interests *prudently*. Prudence may not be a rallying cry, but it remains the chief virtue of a sound foreign policy.

Louisiana Purchased Again

AFTER months of waiting, the Senate Rules Committee finally got a joint report from its two lawyers, a Republican and a Democrat, acknowledging serious problems in last year's Louisiana Senate election and calling for an investigation, albeit a strictly limited one. But the report has deep flaws. In a dubious interpretation of Senate precedent, the report suggests that the challenger, Republican Woody Jenkins, must provide *prima facie* evidence that fraud determined the result in order to justify a full investigation. In other words: prove the election was stolen and the Senate might investigate. Meanwhile, the two lawyers propose that they themselves conduct a month-long further review of the evidence—with just one week on site in New Orleans—to determine if Jenkins meets this threshold.

This proposed "investigation" would inevitably ratify "Senator" Mary Landrieu's dubious 5,788-vote victory. To his credit, Rules Committee Chairman John Warner (R., Va.)—who has prided himself on clashing with GOP conservatives in the past—has been fair throughout to the unabashedly conservative Jenkins, and is now likely to push for a broader investigation. What is clearly needed is a team of experienced, hard-boiled investigators with subpoena power and time to unlock the secrets of New Orleans. It is there that "Senator" Landrieu racked up a devastating 100,000 vote margin stoked by Mayor Marc Morial's LIFE political machine, the leaders of which have compared its practices proudly to those of Mayor Daley's old Chicago machine.

Not without justification. LIFE has failed to file any campaign-disclosure documents with the state or city. Morial now explains that LIFE is not really a political organization and did not hire any street workers to speak of on November 5. But this contradicts the boastful accounts of LIFE officials immediately after the election about the organization's well-disciplined army of a thousand street workers. Among the troops were city employees pressed into service—including the police and fire chiefs. Where the money to fund this operation came from no one knows, but a reasonable guess is that it was anted up by the scandal-ridden gambling interests, anxious to pass a slew of gambling initiatives across the state.

This general atmosphere of disregard for campaign-finance laws provides the background for Mr. Jenkins's specific allegations, which even the Senate report calls "serious." At least a dozen New Orleans residents have told Jenkins investigators in taped interviews that political organizers picked them up in vans in their neighborhoods, gave them LIFE sample ballots to guide their voting, then took them to multiple polling places to vote in exchange for cash. Jenkins has not yet made the names of the interviewees public, but anyone who listens to the tapes will concede that only a dramatist with Samuel Beckett's flair for absurdist dialogue could have fabricated them. And if the number of votes directly implicated is small, so is Mary Landrieu's majority.

Her response to these charges has been to deny any involvement in wrongdoing—which may or may not be true but is irrelevant—and to argue that a conspiracy to commit vote fraud was impossible given New Orleans' electoral safeguards. What safeguards? Landrieu lawyers point to the hot New Orleans district-attorney race between incumbent Harry Connick, a LIFE ally, and black challenger Morris Reed. Surely Reed had poll watchers protecting him from the depredations of LIFE? But Reed says he didn't hire any and contends the election was shot through with fraud. Surely official poll commissioners would have guarded against fraud? But the local press has discovered instances in which commissioners hired by the state to supervise voting in New Orleans took payments from gambling interests.

Allegations of vote fraud typically get laughed out of the public arena. Mr. Jenkins has avoided that fate, but it is not at all certain that he will clear the institutional hurdle that keeps both bodies of Congress from conducting timely, effective investigations of alleged fraud in their own elections. Senate Democrats can be expected to throw obstacles in the way of this investigation; it would threaten one of their seats. But Republicans must overcome the resistance—and their own timorousness. At stake is not just a Senate seat, but a basic democratic principle: elections should be free and fair. Otherwise they are not worth having, not even in New Orleans.

All Scandal, All the Time

IN a recent interview Hillary Clinton said that ongoing interest in Clinton Administration scandals reminded her of "some people's obsession" with the Hale–Bopp comet. There is one difference: Hale–Bopp is going away; the Clinton scandals keep on coming.

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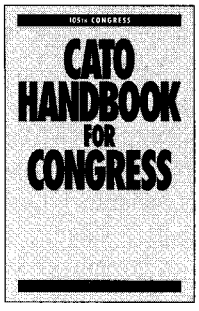

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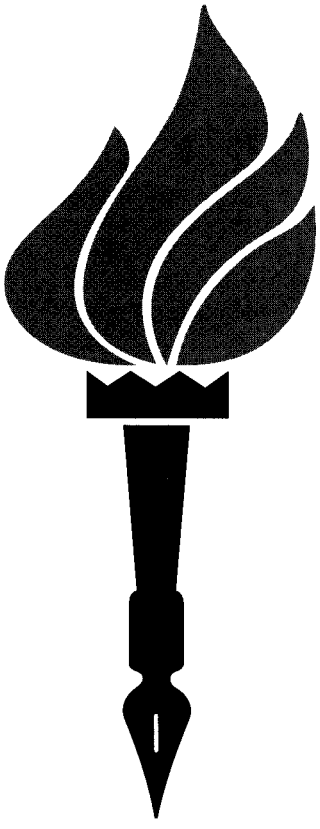

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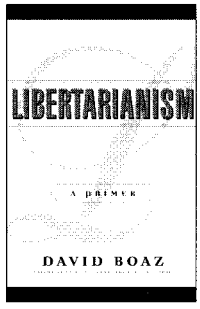

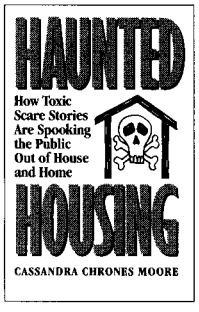

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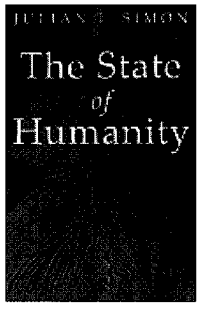

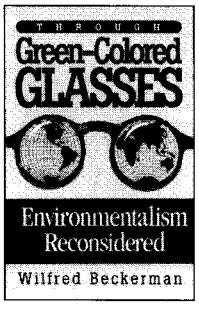

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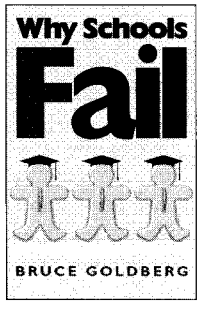

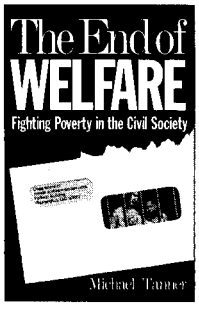

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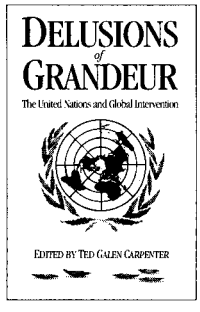

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The latest to come to light is the effort to raise hush money for former Associate Attorney General Webster Hubbell, who announced his resignation on March 14, 1994, with investigators on his tail. Once on the outside, he got nearly half a million dollars in assorted fees. Mack McLarty, then President Clinton's chief of staff, Erskine Bowles, his future chief of staff, and Mickey Kantor, his 1992 campaign chairman, all helped Hubbell drum up business—$100,000 of it from a company controlled by the Riadys of Indonesia.

Mr. Clinton claims that these efforts were spontaneous acts of "compassion," and that he (less compassionate?) knew nothing about them. But James T. Riady saw Clinton twice at the White House in June 1994, during a week in which he also saw Hubbell twice. On the Fourth of July, Mr. Hubbell was a guest of the Clintons at Camp David. The Clintons also claim that the only legal trouble of Hubbell's they were aware of was a "billing dispute" with the Rose Law Firm. But Mrs. Clinton had gotten a seven-page memo on March 1 from a White House lawyer explaining that Hubbell was also being investigated for his legal work for Madison Guaranty, the Whitewater S&L.

It is *conceivable* that none of Clinton's friends told him what they were doing, that the Clintons did not talk to Hubbell about his problems, and that Mrs. Clinton did not read the memo—though that sounds more like the behavior of Heaven's Gate cultists (as long as we're talking about the Hale–Bopp comet). The obvious explanation is that the Clintons and their friends spread a safety net for their falling colleague to ensure his silence.

Did it work? Hubbell pleaded guilty in December 1994 to tax and fraud counts stemming from his Rose Law Firm overbilling. He served 18 months without uttering a discouraging word about the Clintons—a silence he maintains to this day.

So Bill Clinton's Asian money-raising began long before Dick Morris's MediScare ads, with a payoff to a Whitewater crony. The Clintons' secret biography is falling into place, and it is not pretty reading.

The Week in Verse

Once more the rivers rise with April's gales;
Once more *Newt's* April tax amendment fails.
But, though the log-jam may not break this tide,
E'en *Clinton* wants the tax code simplified.
So do we all, yet somehow ill-success
Attends all those who'd change the *IRS*—
Which, far from anything the Founders meant,
Is wasteful, stupid, and incompetent;
Its agents get it wrong, or else they snoop—
Its new computer too's a nincompoop.
Allowed unchecked to pillage and maraud, it
Will stifle crit— What's that you say? An audit!

In spring, the shearers come to take the fleece
While, on Olympus, judges show caprice:
One calmly vetoes vetoes, line by line;
Another resurrects Prop. 209.
And *Reno* says she doesn't think it fit
That a new independent counsel sit—
Congress' wrath she's willing to incur
To keep the *DNC* probe close to her.

Meanwhile, we have as comfort in our trouble,
The Clinton team's "compassion"—poor *Web Hubbell*,
For instance, out of jail but in disgrace,
Knew *Bill* would never turn away his face,
Nor yet the *Friends of Bill* who by him stand
With love, forgiveness, and four hundred grand!
Shame on all those who think there's something funny
About his being giv'n this—hush!—money:
As *Hillary* so confidently knows,
They're like those *cultists* and their UFOs.
What though *McDougal* talks and *Starr*, all ears,
Then lets him off with no more than three years?
What though the shine is coming off *Bill's* slick? He's
E'en proof against the evidence of *Ickes*
(Or so it seems); the *Media're* terrified
Of seeming kooks—or on the other side.

—Juvenal

Impeach Janet Reno

THIS week Attorney General Janet Reno rejected yet another request for an independent counsel to investigate allegations of multiple violations of both campaign-finance law and criminal law by the Clinton–Gore campaign and the Democratic National Committee. As hard as she looks, Miss Reno cannot find a legal justification for such an appointment. Well, yes, there is evidence of possible illegal foreign campaign contributions involving Bill Clinton's friends. Yes, money may have been laundered through Buddhist clergy at an illegal fundraiser featuring Al Gore. Yes, White House staff may have violated the Hatch Act, which prohibits politicking on government time. Yes, former Deputy Chief of Staff Harold Ickes may have attempted to direct political donations to tax-exempt groups. Yes, Al Gore may have made dozens of illegal fundraising calls from the White House. And, yes, Clinton officials and friends may have been part of a Communist Chinese spy-ring. Nonetheless, Attorney General Reno remains unconvinced that an independent counsel is required.

As Mark R. Levin of the Landmark Legal Foundation, and an *NR* contributing editor, has been pointing out for months, the truth is that Janet Reno is not the independent public servant whom liberals portray, but one of the most reliably partisan and compliant officials in the Clinton Administration.

For instance, in August 1993 Miss Reno rejected the appointment of an independent counsel to investigate the White House Travel Office firings despite evidence that Clinton staffers, and perhaps the First Lady, had abused

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Teddy and Orrin

In a duo not witnessed since Beauty
Started getting it on with the Beast,
They're proposing a tax on tobacco
To ensure Tiny Tims with the least;
But with Marlboro shopping for coffins
And the weed such a drag on the Dow,
Who gets stuck when the industry falters
(Are you there?) doesn't furrow a brow.

—W. H. VON DREELE

their power by demanding that the FBI investigate phony embezzlement charges against that office's director, Billy Dale. Instead, Miss Reno's Criminal Division prosecuted Dale, who was cleared by a jury. Not until 1996 did she finally refer the case to an independent counsel. But she chose not to seek a new independent counsel—instead assigning it to Whitewater Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr—because that would have further embarrassed the Administration.

In late 1993 Miss Reno refused to appoint a special prosecutor to investigate the Whitewater affair. Not until Clinton himself asked her did she appoint the first prosecutor, Robert Fiske. And when Independent Counsel Donald Smaltz, who is investigating former Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy for possible bribery, asked her to expand his probe into other areas of possible criminality, Miss Reno said no. Smaltz had to seek approval from a federal court, which granted it. And when the White House was caught collecting hundreds of secret FBI files on Reagan and Bush Administration officials, for months Miss Reno delayed turning that case over to an independent counsel. She eventually relented but, again, she further burdened Starr's Whitewater investigation by assigning this task to him.

Today, Miss Reno justifies her decision not to appoint an independent counsel to investigate the Clinton–Gore campaign-finance scandal by repeatedly misstating the law's requirements. She claims that unless she receives information that high officials, such as the President or Vice President, engaged in a crime, she can't appoint an independent counsel. That is false. The standard is whether, for instance, Mr. Gore *may* have violated federal law. Miss Reno may also appoint an independent counsel if a "personal, financial, or political conflict of interest" exists. Indeed, she used this part of the statute to justify her eventual appointment of a Whitewater independent counsel, but refuses to do so now.

Janet Reno is the only attorney general to support the independent-counsel law. On May 14, 1993, after the law lapsed, she urged the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee to reauthorize it for reasons she now ignores: "The reason that I support the concept of an independent counsel . . . is that there is an inherent conflict whenever senior Executive Branch officials are to be investigated by the [Justice] Department and its appointed head, the Attorney General. The Attorney General serves at the pleasure of the President. . . ."

Janet Reno can no longer be trusted to fulfill her responsibilities as attorney general. She should step down. If she fails to do so, Congress should impeach her.

Affirmative Redaction

THREE federal judges generously decided that, yes, the will of the voters of California on race and gender preferences should be respected, at least for now: the California Civil Rights Initiative will be allowed to go into effect. Three days later, Norma Cantú, the civil-rights enforcer at the Education Department, was forced to back down from her threat to terminate federal aid to Texas colleges that ended preferences (as they were effectively ordered to do by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in *Hopwood* v. *University of Texas*). Finally, the Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal from a fire department that wanted to continue to "cap" the number of whites and men in its employ.

Judges and bureaucrats, in short, are now less of an obstacle to continued progress in the war on preferences than Newt Gingrich's misplaced Republican guilt over segregation. (The people are no obstacle at all: Washington State has an anti-preferences referendum scheduled for November, and efforts are also under way in Colorado, New Jersey, Florida, and Texas.) The House may not, however, be able to dodge the issue this year. It will have to decide whether to re-authorize transportation spending that is chock-full of racial set-asides; and the Clinton Administration may send up a nominee to head the civil-rights division of the Justice Department. Rep. Henry Hyde (R., Ill.), meanwhile, is forging ahead with the bill introduced by Rep. Charles Canady (R., Fla.) to end preferences in federal contracting, employment, and program administration. They plan to hold hearings and mark the bill up without waiting for approval from the House "leadership"—which can still show some, if it shares the moral clarity of the voters of California.

Allen Ginsberg, R I P

ODDLY enough, I first met Allen Ginsberg at NATIONAL REVIEW. I had just published *When the Going Was Good*, a book on the 1950s, and a merry book party was going on in the conference room at our old offices, when Ginsberg unexpectedly appeared with his companion, Peter Orlovsky, a blondish fellow with a ponytail. Ginsberg had two things on his mind. Relying on the testimony of Jack Kerouac, I had written

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that Ginsberg had burned an American flag, which he denied. He also knew that I was then on the board of the National Endowment for the Humanities and he wanted a grant for a new book by Orlovsky, the title of which cannot be printed in a family magazine. I sidestepped this by explaining that he wanted the Endowment for the Arts, but he refused to understand the difference.

Anyway, we became friendly, had lunch now and then, talked about literature and reminisced about Columbia, Lionel Trilling, Mark Van Doren. Allen was surprisingly gentle, even sweet, virtually humorless, and learned about literature. He explained—against conventional opinion—that his "long line" came not from Whitman but from the "Jubilate Agno" of Christopher Smart.

He had been several years ahead of me at Columbia, but his legend was still vivid in the 1950s. He had been in various sorts of trouble in company with Kerouac, Burroughs, and assorted hangers-on, including bona-fide criminals. He inscribed a copy of his *Collected Poems* to me and covered the title page with Buddhist hieroglyphics. His opinions were a mess—he advocated every mad and evil cause from the Vietcong to NAMBLA. But he struck young writers in the late 1950s as a relief from High Modernism. Eliot, Yeats, et al. were so difficult and so strong that after them it seemed no one could write. Ginsberg and Kerouac made it seem that anyone could.

Not quite. The vast bulk of Ginsberg's work seems to me self-indulgent and bombastic: "I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked . . ." The best minds? His poem *Kaddish*, on the death of his mother, Naomi, perhaps has a chance of lasting, but probably not.

He was a figure emblematic of his moment, very consciously, I think, a sad-serious clown of culture. Dead now of cancer at 70. —JEFFREY HART

NOTES & ASIDES

■ Dear Bill:

In his review of Sam Tanenhaus's biography of Whittaker Chambers (*New York Times Book Review*, March 9), Arthur Schlesinger Jr. writes:

"Fearing the 'crackpotism' of the Right, Chambers now retreated from the apocalyptic absolutes of *Witness* . . . He rejected Ludwig von Mises, denounced Ayn Rand, and praised John Kenneth Galbraith. In 1959 he defended the issuance of passports to Paul Robeson—and to Alger Hiss. He welcomed Nikita Khrushchev's visit to the United States, opposed the nuclear arms race, and, wondering whether Mr. Buckley's NATIONAL REVIEW looked forward to World War III, stopped writing for it."

Is this passage accurate?

Sincerely,
Ernie
[Ernest W. Lefever]
Chevy Chase, Md.

Dear Ernie: Here is a quote from a letter from Chambers in October of 1959. "The logic of *NR*'s policy, as no doubt I have said to you before, is: War. If gentlemen hold that war is what is necessary, I, for one, wish they would say so simply, clearly, courageously, stating their reasons for believing so. It is not an easy position; it would take courage to set it forth at all. But it would be an intelligible position, and popular, I am told, with SAC [Strategic Air Command], though I doubt that it would be so with wider circles. But short of this forthrightness, shouts of 'Russia go home!' and the like lack coherence, meaning, gravity." This passage is quoted (e.g., by John Judis in his biography of me) as evidence that WC was fed up with NATIONAL REVIEW. My comment: Chambers disagreed with *NR*'s position here and there, but as much is true of all the other senior editors. The salient point here is that Chambers thoroughly endorsed the general adamance of *NR*'s anti-Soviet position. And in the articles he wrote for us after the letter quoted above he never thought it necessary to record misgivings about the thrust of the magazine. I need hardly add that the position of *NR* was consistently this: that to the extent we were prepared for war, we diminished the likelihood of having to fight a war. Cordially, Bill

■ Dear Mr. Buckley:

My invitation to Russia for the celebration of Mikhail T. Kalashnikov's invention fifty years ago of the AK-47 ("For the Record," April 7) seems to have been lost in the mail. If I had been able to attend, this would have been my toast.

To Mikhail T. Kalashnikov,
Who's done so much for bumping off
And made the automatic gun
Affordable as well as fun.

The methodology of strife,
Freed, through him, from club and knife,
Achieved a new, mature reliance
Upon technology and science.

How fast you'll settle a dispute,
If you've Mikhail's gun to shoot:
Rat-a-tat-a-tat-a-tat-a-tat—
Ain't no arguing with that!

Kalashnikov's great contribution
To modern conflict-resolution
Is, "Try negotiating first,
Then give the other guy a burst."

Yours faithfully,
Phyllis Dean
Spring Grove, Va.

Dear Miss Dean: Terrific! . . . Do you have a poem for the atom bomb? Cordially, **—WFB**

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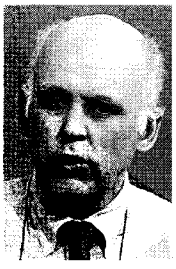

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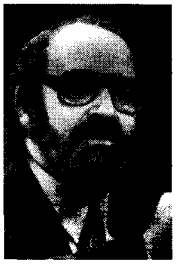

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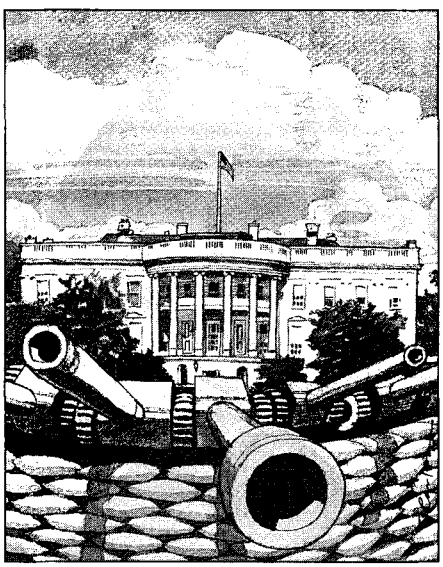

Frederick H. Carlson

WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE clearest indication yet that Democrats hope to decapitate the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee came on Thursday, April 10, in the *Wall Street Journal*—an Al Hunt column vilifying the committee's chairman, Dan Burton (Ind.). In the media food chain, Al Hunt is in the spot closest to Washington's Democratic apparatus, feasting on its handouts. The Democratic target *du jour* is Burton, and so Hunt hit him for his "fringe views and theories," called one of his staffers a "wacko," and warned that a campaign-finance allegation against Burton "could prove dreadfully serious." That allegation was lodged by Democratic activist Mark Siegel, who Hunt assures his readers is a credible source.

Hunt should know. As he says (but not in this column) he "has known Mark going back twenty years to the 1976 campaign." Hunt's name pops up from time to time in Mark Siegel's filings related to his work as a lobbyist for the government of Pakistan. In one March 1993 filing, Siegel reports talking with "Albert Hunt numerous times concerning Pakistan and the ongoing deteriorating political situation." Another stipulates that "Mark Siegel, through Al Hunt . . . assisted in the arrangement of an interview for the *Wall Street Journal* with Kamran Shafi, Secretary to the Prime Minister of Pakistan." Hunt calls his contacts with Siegel "routine," and explains that he can't disclose all his friendships in his column because "probably 90 per cent of the people I write about I know personally."

Which, no doubt, is true. It just happens that Dan Burton isn't one of them (although Hunt was kind enough to ask him to lunch after calling him in preparing the hit piece). The eight-term Indiana congressman is the latest Republican investigating Clinton scandals to get hurt by the double whammy. First, the White House and its defenders hit any high-profile GOP critics with ethics charges of their own. Then, Washington's clubby crew of leading journalists like Al Hunt ratify the attack. Sen. Al D'Amato (R., N.Y.) has been a victim, as has Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr. Burton now joins their company.

Dan Burton has his rough edges and eccentricities (he famously re-enacted the Vince Foster suicide in his backyard). But so did former House Banking Chairman Henry Gonzalez, the irascible Texan who called on both Presidents Reagan and Bush to resign and later held Whitewater hearings generally considered a partisan whitewash—but still managed to escape Al Hunt's wrath. The difference, of course, is that Burton is a threat to the Democratic White House. He has already issued 101 subpoenas related to White House fundraising. When Democrats on his committee recently tried to strip him of the power to issue subpoenas on his own, Burton simply stood his ground.

This fearlessness is an open invitation to trouble, and Burton has gotten it in the form of Mark Siegel, the Pakistani lobbyist. The *Washington Post* recently reported on a July 25, 1996, memo from Siegel alleging that Burton, a staunch friend of Pakistan, threatened him when he failed to raise $5,000 for Burton's re-election campaign. According to Siegel, Burton told him that if "I knew what was good for me I'd deliver the money," then told people that Siegel would be banned from his office. Burton denies it, saying only that he asked Siegel to raise the money and that, when Siegel didn't, he expressed his chagrin to the Pakistani ambassador. No one knows who is telling the truth. But on the strength of the Siegel allegation the *Washington Post*—among others—is already calling on Burton to step aside.

But there are plenty of reasons to be skeptical of Siegel's account:

—Siegel is a long-time Democratic activist who served as executive director of the Democratic National Committee in the mid 1970s and as liaison to the American Jewish community in the Carter White House. Since the early 1970s, he has been close personal friends with fellow Maryland Democratic activist Lanny Davis, who is now point-man of the White House's scandal defense team. As recently as late 1994—when Davis was still in private practice—he worked closely with Siegel representing Pakistani interests.

When Democrats tried to strip him of the power to issue subpoenas on his own, Burton stood his ground.

—Parts of Siegel's story don't make sense. At least one of Siegel's associates corroborates his story. But the Pakistanis say they never saw Siegel's most damning piece of evidence against Burton: the July 25, 1996, memo he allegedly sent detailing Burton's "shakedown." It's unclear why, if Siegel felt that Burton was threatening his livelihood, he didn't turn to law enforcement right away. Instead, Siegel's memo did not surface until seven months later, the

Mr. Lowry is NR*'s national political reporter.*

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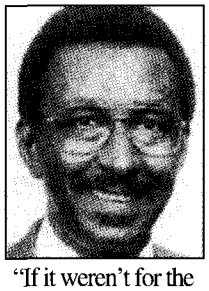

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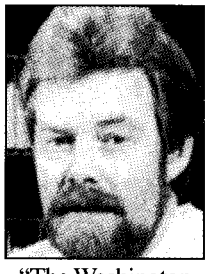

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day before a key House vote on Burton's budget.

—It's not clear that Burton did anything illegal. Most insiders agree that for a lobbyist making nearly half a million a year—as Siegel was from Pakistan—to be asked by one of his client's surest friends to raise $5,000 is hardly extraordinary. For Siegel not to be able to raise such chicken feed would be devastating commentary on his effectiveness. And no laws prohibit getting mad at a lobbyist. Hunt and others suggest that Burton violated the Hobbs Act. That law makes it illegal to extort contributions from a lobbyist through official acts—like promising to vote a certain way on legislation. No one accuses Burton of that.

But none of this matters—it's the political hit that Burton has already taken that is important. As one Washington observer puts it, "The Democrats are trying to prevent a 1998 blow-out. They know if this scandal has legs they have no chance of re-taking Congress in the next decade." That's why, on the scandals, there have been no significant breaks in Democratic loyalty (the Siegel memo was leaked to the *Post* by a Democratic congressional office). Democrats are simply aping the formula the Clinton White House used so successfully in its first term: seek and destroy critics. In August 1995 the White House distributed 12 pages of talking points attacking Resolution Trust Corporation investigator Jean Lewis, who alleged Administration interference in her Whitewater work. (After being put through the wringer by Senate Democrats, she had to be taken to the hospital for dangerously high blood pressure.)

The bigger fish the White House fried in 1995–96 was Al D'Amato, whose political stock drastically diminished following his tangles with the White House over Whitewater. In the media, D'Amato has become an object lesson. Even though his hearings were productive—possible hush payments to Web Hubbell were first raised there—it has become common wisdom that they were too partisan. Republicans who internalize that view, like Sen. Fred Thompson, who heads the current Senate investigation, get a pass from the media (Al Hunt reserves a nice word for him in his Burton column). Those who don't, come in for the same pounding as Burton.

Rep. David McIntosh is the sophomore from Indiana investigating the White House database scandal. The staff of the McIntosh-led Regulatory Affairs Subcommittee often meets with representatives of business and other interests to hear complaints about regulation. Lists of these meetings are sent to the full committee each month. Committee Democrats recently leaked the list to reporters from the *Wall Street Journal*, who checked it against a list of McIntosh contributors and wrote a breathless story about how some contributions came within a month of subcommittee meetings. Never mind that some of the amounts involved were risible (e.g., $250 from W. R. Grace) and that subcommittee staff have no idea who is or is not a McIntosh contributor. In fact, a review by McIntosh's office revealed his staff met with 44 groups in 1995–6 that gave more than $2 million to the Democrats.

Democrats hope such stories, no matter how flimsy, will reinforce the perception that all of Washington—not just the White House—is corrupt. The only way to avoid the taint, apparently, is to be friends with opinion-makers. *Washington Post* columnist Richard Cohen dismisses the notion that Web Hubbell was paid hush money. Why? "I do know some of the others who supposedly arranged this hush money," he writes. "It's not conceivable they would knowingly participate in this kind of conspiracy." On the CNBC show *Hardball*, *U.S. News* publisher Mort Zuckerman recently agreed: "I think anybody who knows Erskine Bowles or Mack McLarty could not ascribe to them a criminal intent to try to obstruct justice." Accordingly, if Burton wants to call off the attack dogs, he need only do two things: 1) forget about all those White House subpoenas; 2) accept Al Hunt's invitation to lunch. □

Paper Tigers

RAMESH PONNURU

WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE cases begin to blur together. Dai Guillang, sentenced to labor camp by the Chinese government for the crime of propagating the Book of Genesis. Zheng Musheng, arrested, tortured, and killed by the Bureau of Public Security for being an evangelical Christian. Catholic Bishop Su Chimin, beaten with a board until it was reduced to splinters and then with a wooden door frame until it, too, splintered; placed in a tiny room for days hip-deep in water; beaten while hanging by his wrists.

While the Chinese regime's hostility to the rights of political dissidents is well known, only recently has its systematic persecution of Christians drawn attention. (Credit the Hudson Institute's Michael Horowitz and Freedom House's Nina Shea, whose *In the Lion's Den* documents persecution of Christians.) On Easter Sunday, some American critics of the regime released an open letter imploring Vice President Al Gore to champion religious freedom in China. That letter finally moved the Administration to issue a denunciation—of the critics. Signatories, including former Pennsylvania Gov. Bob Casey (D.), Southern Baptist leader Richard Land, and academics John DiIulio, Robert George, and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, were labeled "right-wing extremists" by Gore staffer Ginny Terzano. (She has since apologized to Casey.)

Outrage against China's oppression of Christians and the Administration's morally obtuse response is fueling the strongest challenge yet to the bipartisan establishment's policy of "engagement."

Only recently has China's systematic persecution of Christians drawn attention.

Says one House Republican foreign-policy aide, "I've never seen an issue take off as fast as this has over the last six months. . . . A lot of folks who otherwise are not the least bit interested in geopolitics are interested in this." Folks

Mr. Ponnuru is NR*'s national reporter.*

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The contempt of the Chinese government for the most elementary human rights standards has been on display for years, and the campaign against men and women of faith has been intensifying, even as our government waxes ever more eager for economic engagement.

An open letter to Vice President Gore:

On March 4, as you were preparing for your trip to China, agents from the Shanghai Public Security Bureau invaded and ransacked the apartment of Bishop Fan Zhongliang, S.J., the Coadjutor Roman Catholic Bishop of Shanghai. Bishop Fan was targeted because the Chinese government has banned all religious activity and expression outside the system of state-controlled "churches" it has established as part of its campaign against religion. According to the Cardinal Kung Foundation in Stamford, Connecticut, the police seized Bishop Fan's bibles, missals, catechism, the Code of Canon law, and other religious items and writings. The agents also confiscated all of the church's cash assets in Bishop Fan's possession.

This act of terrorism was plainly timed to intimidate Catholics and other Christians in the period leading up to Holy Week and Easter. Chinese authorities engaged in a similar crackdown last December, targeting Catholics and Protestants in a campaign designed to prevent any observance of Christmas. If history is any guide, the raid on Bishop Fan will be revealed to be part of a larger campaign of terror and religious oppression throughout China.

The contempt of the Chinese government for basic human rights has been on display for years. Sadly, the campaign against men and women of faith has been intensifying rather than diminishing, even as our government has promoted increasing economic engagement with China. Our own State Department, and human rights groups like the Puebla Institute, have documented the chilling details of this campaign. Priests have been arrested for saying Mass. Evangelical "house church" services have been disrupted and buildings holding such services have been bulldozed. Arrests, interrogations, and internment of Christians in "re-education" programs have been common. Anti-religious slogans have been painted by police officials in China's town squares. In January 1996, as reported by the State Department, an annual government religious affairs conference invoked a "harder line" against any religious activity that is not organized and directed by communist "party loyalists."

What have you done in China?

Has the Clinton-Gore administration directed our US Embassy in Beijing to put human rights issues at the top of our concerns in relations between our two countries?

Did you seriously, and specifically, raise these issues of religious persecution at any time during your meetings with Premier Li Peng or other hosts for your trip? If so, what was their response? What, if any, commitments did you receive?

In view of your role as the administration's "point man" on China issues, have you taken any other steps to fulfill the pledge made in the 1992 Clinton-Gore campaign to hold China to account for its abysmal human rights record?

During your visit in China, did you meet with any Chinese dissidents? *We call to mind the fact that such meetings were a key component of US policy vis-a-vis the Soviet Union during the Cold War, and that they served invaluable purposes in advancing the cause of human rights behind the Iron Curtain.*

Ambassador James Sasser said, in January 1996, that he was unaware of the Evangelical house church movement in its persecution in China. Has he now been thoroughly briefed on this movement and is he prepared to assert the strong protest of the United States in the event that those involved in this movement continue to be harassed and punished?

Will the Clinton-Gore administration publish interim reports regarding China's progress on human rights in advance of the upcoming exchange of visits between President Jiang Zemin and President Clinton?

Repression of religious belief and practice has extended to China's 17 million Muslims and to Buddhists in Zhejiang and Hubei provinces and in Tibet. In Zhejiang alone, some 17,900 shrines and churches were "rectified," a government euphemism which connotes destruction, registration with the government as a controlled church, or transfer to another group.

Only last September, Premier Li Peng, whom you toasted on your visit to China in commemoration of the new commercial arrangements between our nations, said that Chinese government departments must *"step up the control of religious affairs"* and that religion *"should serve the aims of socialism."*

It is in this atmosphere that the Easter Week crackdown has proceeded.

It is in this atmosphere that you are visiting China. Your trip has been hailed by powerful US business interests who lustfully eye the potentially vast Chinese market.

Your presence in China has been exploited for good publicity by the cruel communist tyrants who are responsible for the regime's war against religion. Yet you apparently did and said little in the cause of its victims. So we must respectfully ask the questions you see here.

Mr. Vice President, there is no question that US-China policy stands at a crucial crossroads. Our nation is being tested on its commitment to basic principles of justice and human rights in the face of a temptation to sacrifice these principles in the pursuit of profits. History has chosen President Clinton and you to represent this nation at that crossroads.

We pray that you will have the courage to stand with the victims of oppression in China and show the world that America still believes in "liberty and justice for all."

Put human rights before profits.

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who are interested in geopolitics, meanwhile, are concerned over China's territorial aggressiveness, military build-up, impending takeover of Hong Kong, intimidation of Taiwan, arming of rogue states like Iran, and rhetorical anti-Americanism. Republicans interested in making hay of possible Chinese interference in U.S. politics are also getting on the bandwagon. Finally, protectionists in both parties fret about America's trade deficit with China and its allegedly unfair trade practices.

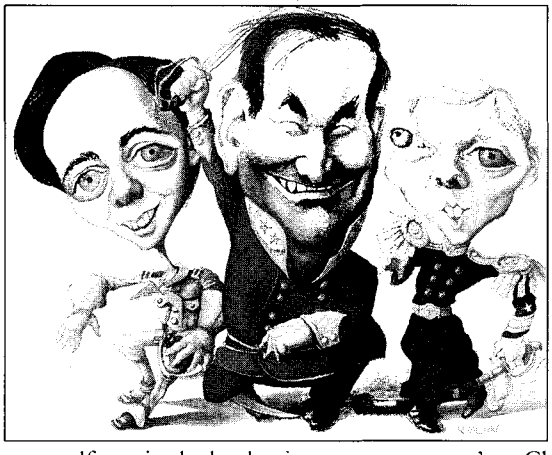
Robert Kagan, who provides intellectual leadership for the anti-China lobby from his perch at *The Weekly Standard*, says, "We're seeing on this issue at least a re-formation of the Reagan coalition that essentially broke down when the Soviet Union collapsed." The anti-China camp now includes religious conservatives (led by Gary Bauer, with Ralph Reed straggling behind), organized labor, human-rights activists, anti-Communists, and a journalistic coalition of *The New Republic*, the *Standard*, and *Human Events*.

They want Congress to revoke China's "most-favored-nation" status, a misleading term for the normal trade relations the U.S. has with even Syria and Libya. California Reps. Chris Cox (R.) and Nancy Pelosi (D.) are eager to lead the fight this summer. They will be joined by House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt (D., Mo.) and his lieutenant David Bonior (D., Mich.), who seek to humble the reigning Clinton–Gore wing of their party in the run-up to 2000. Patrick Buchanan, pursuing his constituency of socially conservative unionists, has departed from his usual isolationism to join this crusade.

The crusade's opponents include members of the Administration, corporations doing business with China, hard-core (and mainly libertarian) free-traders, old foreign-policy hands like James Baker and retiring Rep. Lee Hamilton (D., Ind.), influential right-wing journalist Robert Novak, and Kissingerian "realists" (with the exception of *Foreign Affairs* managing editor Fareed Zakaria). In the middle are Speaker Newt Gingrich, *NR*, *Far Eastern Economic Review* senior editor William McGurn, and the *Wall Street Journal*, whose columnist Paul Gigot advocates "engaging China with trade but speaking more bluntly, and deterring its worst habits more aggressively, than the Clinton Administration has been willing to do." The Heritage Foundation falls between this group and the Administration: it is pro-MFN and against confrontation with China, but critical of Clinton's supine posture.

Conservatives leading the anti-China lobby relish having powerful opponents. Plenty of conservatives would like to challenge the corporate dominance of the Republican Party. "At the end of the day," says Kagan, "the businesses can deliver a lot of money but they can't deliver the votes." His allies regard the corporate proponents of accommodation with China as rope-sellers, the same people the Reaganites fought during the Cold War. There are also factional scores to settle within the Right. Remarks Bauer, "I think the days are over when a few libertarian think tanks could make policy for the whole conservative movement."

Thus, libertarian arguments advanced self-servingly by business groups aren't taken seriously, even when the arguments have merit. Take the classical view that economic liberalization will lead to political liberalization, and that unregulated commerce promotes both. As McGurn puts it, "Trade has been the most beneficial influence on China in thousands of years. . . . The countries where Communism fell fastest and most softly—Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany—were those most involved with the outside world." William Kristol dismisses this notion as "reverse Marxism." Kagan observes that China might not mellow in time to avoid a conflict.



Roman Genn

Participants in the debate over China policy don't agree even on the nature of the regime. Gigot writes that China "is more authoritarian than totalitarian," like "the South Korea or Taiwan of the 1960s." It has certainly liberalized, particularly on economic matters. The counter-evidence is China's treatment of religion: the demand that subjects recognize no power higher than the state is, after all, a characteristic of totalitarianism. Nina Shea vehemently rejects Gigot's comparison, dubbing China "the Evil Empire redux."

Evil Empire or not, it isn't clear that a sensible foreign policy is possible under this Administration. Says Rep. Cox, "The only reason that the Republican Congress is involving itself directly in China policy is that the Administration hasn't got one." Rep. Jim Talent (R., Mo.), a thoughtful Republican who is agonizing over MFN, says that on the Hill there's "a growing sense that the Chinese need to understand that we can stand up to them if necessary. I think that there is a reluctance to do it through MFN, a sense that it's the wrong medium. But it may be the only one we have." One reason for the reluctance is the collateral damage that revoking MFN could wreak on Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Michael Horowitz, for one, thinks it would be easier and more productive to cut off Export–Import Bank and International Monetary Fund aid to China than to cut off trade: "When people find out, Wait a minute, we're shelling out taxpayer bucks for this, they'll say, 'Who did you say your opponent was, Mr. Senator?" The U.S. has many other policy tools at its disposal, from cooperating with Taiwan on missile defense to prohibiting trade with companies affiliated with the Chinese army. Ultimately, however, any strategy will have to involve restoring America's defenses and its presence in the region. As Sinologist Charles Horner observes, "China can't displace America. We can only displace ourselves."

Rep. Talent also worries that an unsuccessful attempt to revoke MFN, or sanctions that are undercut by other Western nations, will make America "end up looking weaker." The former scenario is more likely: there probably aren't enough votes to override a Clinton veto. Kagan points out, however, that in the early Nineties China made concessions when congressmen were threatening an MFN cutoff. James Lilley, Bush's ambassador to China and an MFN proponent, concedes that the congressional "bad cops" gave the "good cops" more leverage during his posting. So the fact that a debate is taking place in Washington might do some good regardless of its outcome. □

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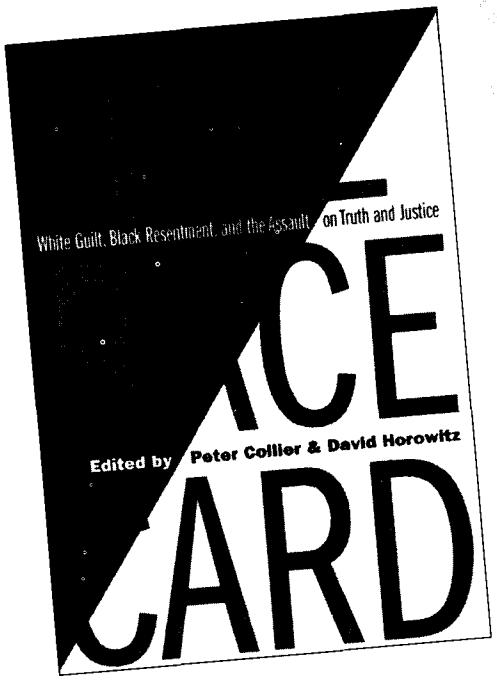

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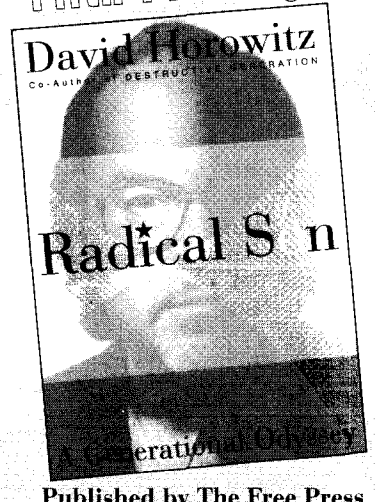

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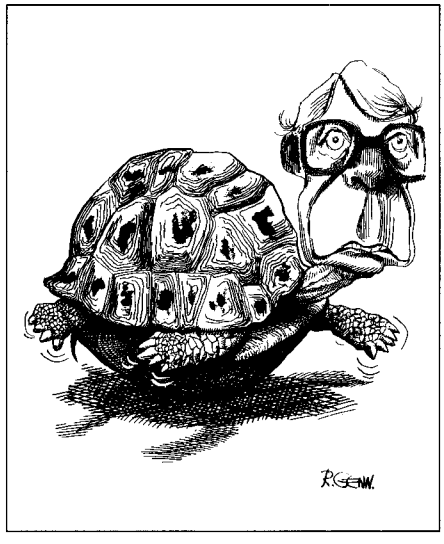
ON THE SCENE

Setting Sun

MARK STEYN



Roman Genn

FROM BELFAST TO BRIGHTON

SOMEHOW the end of an era ought to be more epic than this. But to date in Britain's election campaign, the Conservatives, aping the American Democrats, have sent around a man in a chicken suit to taunt the Labour leader for being too scared to debate the Prime Minister; Labour has responded by sending the Tories a man dressed as a headless chicken; Captain Jean-Luc Picard of the starship *Enterprise* has endorsed Labour, whose gleeful leader has denounced the Tories as "the ultimate Klingons"; on the subject of ruthless aliens, the owner of Harrod's, an Egyptian businessman called Mohammed Al-Fayed, who was denied British nationality back in the Eighties and has been waging a campaign against the government ever since, has seen his scheme to entrap Conservative MPs into taking bribes bear fruit.

As far as corruption goes, Westminster is considerably less grubby than Washington, the capitals of Europe, or even Dublin, so the allegations are footling stuff—a complimentary weekend at the Paris Ritz, some cash in a brown paper envelope for asking questions in the House of Commons; the combined total comes to about one and a half slurps of White House coffee. Nonetheless, the media, Labour, and the Liberal Democrats have been piously demanding a complete clean-out of the Augean stables. To date one MP, Tim Smith, has dropped out of his re-election race; another, Neil Hamilton, has declined to budge. To protest Hamilton's refusal to quit, the opposition parties decided to put up as his opponent not a mere politician but someone who was beyond reproach, whiter than white, cleaner than clean—in other words, a member of the media. The BBC war reporter Martin Bell stepped forward to announce that he would run against Hamilton as the "Anti-Corruption" candidate. To remind everyone that Bell had been shot in the Balkans, he was flanked at his press conference by Colonel "Bonking Bob" Stewart, a veteran of Bosnia and celebrated tabloid adulterer. It says something for how much media reality has supplanted real reality that a war reporter is now accorded the status of a war hero.

"It's journalists running the debate," complained (of all things) a TV racing commentator on a late-night show.

"Who d'you want running it?" scoffed the heavyweight news anchor with exquisite condescension. "Teachers? Milkmen?" I had traveled to Knutsford in Cheshire in search of a milkman to put up against Bell as the "Anti-Media" candidate, but, dropping in at the BBC man's hotel, I found the staff almost delirious with excitement at a call in support of Bell from David Soul, who played Hutch in *Starsky and* and went on to become a prototype celebrity recovering spouse-abuser.

"Ooh, I love that David Soul song from the Seventies," said my waitress, serving me someone else's order. "You know the one—*'Don't give up on us, baby—/We're still worth one last try/Before you go and say goodbye . . .'*"

And there, in a nutshell, is the Tories' election message. After 18 years, the Party itself seems demob happy. "You've just come from America?" giggled one girl, a member of one of the Tories' most distinguished families. "What do you make of this weird cult who lived totally cut off from the real world until the arrival of the Hale–Bopp comet, when their charismatic leader led them all to mass suicide? But enough about the Tories. Har-har-har!"

As it happens, the comparison isn't entirely accurate. The male members of the Heaven's Gate cult were mostly castrated, a minimum entry requirement which, had the Tories adopted it, might have saved John Major a lot of grief. No sooner had he asked the Queen for a general election than he found himself ensnared in what, even by his party's prodigious standards, was an accelerated round of trouser-dropping. Piers Merchant, a Tory MP, was exposed by the tabloids for having an extramarital affair with a 17-year-old "nightclub hostess"; then, a married Scottish MP, Allan Stewart, was forced to step down after admitting to an affair with a young woman; then, the fellow chosen to take his place, Sir Michael Hirst, was forced to step down after admitting to an affair with a young man. . . . "You wouldn't think they had it in them," said Joyce, as our train sped from London to Manchester. "They look such quiet chaps."

"They're at it with anything," said her friend Bunty. "I like it myself. It makes them more human. You're watching them on telly and they're boring on about something you can't make head nor tail of like . . ."

Captain Jean-Luc Picard of the starship Enterprise *has endorsed Labour.*

"Convergence criteria?" I suggested.

"Exactly. And it cheers you up to think, well, he may look boring, but he probably stops off on the way home for a three-in-a-bed sex romp . . ."

". . . to get whipped in women's cloth-

Mr. Steyn is film critic for The Spectator.

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by Mike Hensen

Ex-Navy engineer puts armor-piercing material on a driver. Outguns steel and titanium on distance.

PGA professionals outhit their titanium drivers by 25 and 50 yards

YALESVILLE, CT – And you thought steel and titanium were tough. Well, steel and titanium can't penetrate an armor-plated tank or sink a warship. To pierce their defenses the military had to make something so powerful it had to keep it secret... so powerful that once it was declassified, some innovative company would surely apply it to the face of a golf club to add distance.

One has and it doesn't bode well for golf's current state-of-the-art metal, titanium. A well-known professional outhit his own titanium driver with the new club by 25 yards. Another Tour professional outhit his titanium driver by almost 50 yards!

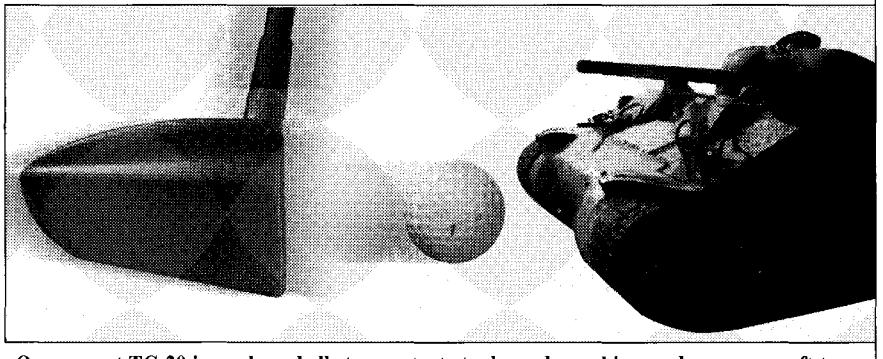
The new driver is the creation of a former Naval Ordnance engineer who used to apply the material to the tips of torpedoes, and a small golf company in Connecticut. Together, they have adapted it to the hitting surface of a steel driver. They say

"The harder it's hit, the farther it goes."

their adaptation is proprietary and a patent has been applied for.

All the company will say is that the new metal is a sort of ceramic titanium, ceramic for hardness and titanium for strength and lightness. The material – called TC-20 – is twice as hard as steel and 70% harder than titanium. It whacks a ball with such force that at clubhead speeds of 120 MPH – the level of longball champs – the new club split the cover on some balls.

TC-20 also increases a golfer's accuracy by holding the ball on the face of the club four times longer than steel and titanium. This makes off-center shots far less likely to hook or slice, and allows a good golfer to draw and fade the ball with more control. I watched a top Tour professional test the club at a PGA Tournament. Here's what he told me.



Once-secret TC-20 is used on shells to penetrate tanks and warships, and on spacecraft to withstand heat on re-entry. It is twice as hard as steel, 70% harder than titanium.

"I'm hitting the ball 30 yards past my driver and controlling it like a five-iron. You see all my competitors smiling at me? That's not admiration. It's worry."

The company's Research Director explained the club this way...

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"You know who he is? (I said I did.) He loves the club. I wish he weren't tied up with a big company. He would shoot in the 50's with the Condor Armor-Pierce. Imagine that on TV. Titanium drivers would be history before he changed shoes, especially at Condor Armor-Pierce's price."

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Oh, yes. If you swing at 120 MPH, take some extra balls.

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ing in a dungeon," added Joyce. "It's sweet, really," she decided and, gazing dreamily at the dreary housing tracts flashing by, gave a nostalgic sigh. "I'll miss them after the election. There won't be any of that with Labour."

SO THIS is the way the world ends, not with a whimper but with a bang. In April 1979, I flew into London from Montreal on the eve of the Thatcher revolution; 18 years later, I'm making the same trip for what seems sure to be the final curtain. But what a difference. Back then, everywhere you went, earnest young men and ferocious middle-aged ladies told you that this was the last chance for a Britain enfeebled by state-owned industries, quasi-governmental trade unions, and crippling 90 per cent tax rates. This time around, in an exhaustive trawl of the British electorate from Belfast to Brighton, Joyce and Bunty's soft spot for Tory proclivities is the nearest anyone gets to a positive political endorsement. The IRA has done its best to disrupt the campaign by arranging various bomb scares at London railway terminals and on major motorways, but it's a waste of Semtex: there's no campaign to disrupt.

In the Seventies, Mrs. Thatcher's deputy, Willie Whitelaw, famously accused the Labour Party of going around the country "stirring up apathy." In this election, the apathetics are the most vehemently stirred up. I don't mean just regular apathetics, like almost everyone under twenty, hanging around windswept shopping centers—"Thatcher's children," as they're called, first-time voters with no memory of any government other than the Tories: "Nah, I'm no' gonna vote," they say, kicking tin cans outside the local SuperCigs. "This election, iss all been got up by the media, issn' it?" I made the mistake of pointing out to some of these youths that this wasn't *strictly* true: the Queen had dissolved Parliament; a writ of election had been issued. Later that evening, I returned to find one of my tires slashed.

But these are what one would call the traditional apathetics. Ron, whose tow truck came to rescue me, represented the strain of stirred-up apathetics. "Not a word about the bloody election or you'll be walking home," he cautioned, as I hopped up into his truck. The militant apathetics are everywhere, though their reasons differ: some cannot forgive the Tories for the recession of the early Nineties, a recession that was prolonged by the government's adherence to the European Exchange Rate Mechanism and that left many of its core supporters with "negative equity" in their homes and in thrall to the banks; others loathe the government for its dithering in the face of Eurostandardization. "You know what was the final straw for me?" said Belinda, a jolly country girl. "When the European Union ruled that we could no longer measure horses in hands but had to use centimeters. And the government did absolutely *nothing*."

Well, maybe they were busy with interest rates or foreign policy . . .

"Don't be absurd," she snapped. "If they won't even stand up for the British horse, then what's the point of Britain? God rot the lot of them." Her kingdom for a horse, it seems.

Among old-time Labour's once vast client state of public-sector workers, trade unionists, welfare junkies, and provincial university lecturers, you'll find militant apathetics, too—unreconstructed socialists who can't stomach the modish, metropolitan latte-swillers of "New Labour." But it seems to me the cutting edge, the new wave, and perhaps even the radical center of Britain's swelling apathy movement are those who have half absorbed the steady drip-drip-drip of news stories about the centralized, overbearing, power-crazed Eurocracy of Brussels and, instead of taking this constitutional affront as a call to arms, have subconsciously concluded that national elections no longer matter very much. I think they're half right: this will be the last British election that matters. The European Union already has a flag, a national anthem, and a citizenship; it has a nascent foreign and defense establishment, which successfully persuaded the Bush Administration to butt out of Bosnia: as Jacques Poos, Luxembourg's foreign minister, proclaimed, "The hour of Europe has come"—which, translated into Serbo-Croat, means: "There goes the neighborhood." By 2002, the EU will have a single currency, a central bank, and a fledgling Eurotaxation policy, to all of which Westminster, kicking and screaming, will have signed up. There is a ratchet effect at work which the British are too defeatist to resist.

"Ingratitude is the prerogative of the people," as the Shah of Iran used to say: the Tories are the right party with the wrong electorate. In the election of May 1979, I stayed with a pal who had just moved into his first apartment and for whom the state phone company had confidently promised they'd install a phone line by, oh, mid November at the earliest. In the meantime, we had to go to the pay phone down the street, which never worked, so we traipsed on to the one beyond that and hurriedly made our calls as the traditional pool of urine, without which no British phone box was complete, rotted our shoe leather. Today, you can get a new phone line within 36 hours, the pay phones mostly work and accept not only coins but phone cards and credit cards, and the privatized British Telecom has become a world communications power which has just swallowed MCI. And all the British do is gripe about how these "fat cat" chairmen of privatized industries make such huge salaries.

Meanwhile, Sir Gilbert Scott's red telephone kiosks have given way to U.S.-style hub phones, and the Crown atop them has been replaced by a prancing ninny in striped underwear, an innovative logo created by a go-ahead design firm. In making Britain successful, Mrs. Thatcher, perhaps inevitably, also made it less British. The country is now full of not just the usual American mega-global detritus but also ersatz local varieties, like Euston Station's "Dixie Donuts," which, carelessly disdaining authenticity, flies the Stars and Stripes rather than the Confederate flag.

Mrs. Thatcher is not blind to her people's newfound tastes. Campaigning at an elementary school in Christchurch the other day, she came across a photogenic moppet. "And what's your name?" she asked.

"Jade," said the little girl.

"That's a nice name," said Mrs. Thatcher, and then turned serenely to

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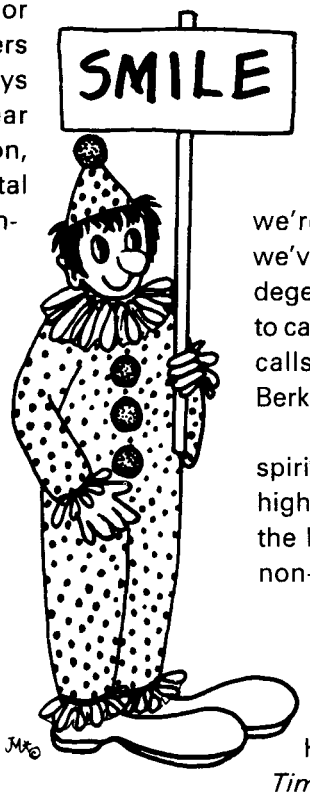
Sick and Tired of Catholicism-Lite?

The Vatican thunders against abortion, priestesses, same-sex "marriage," assisted suicide, illicit sex, consumerism, smutty sex education, defective theology, and more. But walk into your average parish. *Where's the beef?*

All we get are *crumbs*: balloons or clowns or liturgical dancers or banners with greeting-card sentiments, but always platitudinous homilies. We don't hear about the Church's teachings on abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality, pre-marital sex, pornography, birth control, the indissolubility of marriage, Hell, etc. *Why not?* "Too controversial," whines the cowardly pastor. Pop psychology and feel-good "theology" are all the go. Shack-ups and homosexual partnerships are considered morally equivalent to Holy Matrimony, for Father Fluff doesn't refer to husbands and wives as husbands and wives anymore — now he calls them "partners," just like people in immoral unions, lest those living in sin feel "marginalized" or, well, sinful. Indeed, sin and repentance are passé, prompting one to wonder why Christ bothered to get crucified and why the martyrs chose death over compromising the Faith.



Wimpy clerics, deathly afraid of being Politically Incorrect, keep the full Catholic message from us. We're being robbed of our history, doctrine, moral resources, and intellectual heritage. No wonder many Catholics, who don't have a clue as to what Catholicism stands for, fall for anything our decadent culture entices them with!

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the child's mother. "You must be very careful when choosing a name, you know. Because a name is for life."

Quite. In this election, all the parties are lumbered with names that no longer mean much. To many conservatives, the problem with the Conservative Party is that there's nothing they want to conserve. To liberals and democrats, the Liberal Democrats, in their eagerness to subordinate themselves to a Cartesian Euro-elite, aren't very liberal or democratic. To organized labor, the Labour Party, once cheerfully chaotic, is now more organized but not much to do with labor. It is said that Labour considered junking its name but couldn't find anything to put in its place: my own suggestion is "I Can't Believe It's Not Tory!"

To many conservatives, the problem with the Conservative Party is that there's nothing they want to conserve.

I first met Tony Blair a couple of years ago early one morning at the BBC's New York office. I had gone in around 6 A.M. to do a show and happened to be passing the deserted reception area when the buzzer went. I opened the door to find a young man in neatly pressed denim with a goofball permagrin: he insisted he was Britain's shadow Home Secretary come in to do a quick denunciation of the Tories' proposed prison reforms for BBC Radio in London. It went so well that they asked him if he'd mind saying exactly the same thing on camera for the benefit of BBC Television. Conscious of his nerdy leisurewear, he started casting around for a necktie to borrow. It was a choice between the engineer's Squaresville paisley number or mine, a raucous riot of disparate colliding objects. Nervously, he plumped for mine. A few months later, back in Britain, I discovered that, mainly on the strength of this spectacular appearance in my tie, Blair had become party leader and the most beloved politician in the country, with several polls indicating he was more popular than Hugh Grant and Elizabeth Hurley combined.

Backstage at the David Frost show, he thanked me for my tie but churlishly insisted there were other factors contributing to his success. It is hard to see what they were. Frosty's first question was something like, "Tony Blair, you played guitar in a rock band at Oxford. Do you hope to be strumming your way to the top of the electoral Hit Parade?" Blair is often described as Clinton Lite, and you can imagine how easily the President would have whacked that one over the stadium wall. But Blair froze like a deer in the headlights, his grin hanging half-formed like a Cheshire cat whose Prozac hasn't kicked in yet. Eventually, he said, "Well, of course, I'm fully, ah, *committed* to, er, expanding *opportunity* for *all* the British people . . ." Clinton is a genuine phony; to Blair, it comes far less glibly.

On the campaign trail, local reporters claim to have spotted an earpiece through which his minders feed him the correct responses to voters' concerns. I don't know why they bother: the correct response to every question is, "Whatever the Conservatives say, only more so." There was a famously disastrous West End audition in which the aspiring chorine missed the point of that Gershwin song of contrasts—"You say tomayto, I say tomahto," etc.—by singing, "You say tomayto, I say tomayto; / You say potayto, I say potayto . . ." That's Tony Blair's Labour Party. The Conservative Home Secretary, Michael Howard, attacks beggars; so does his Labour shadow, Jack Straw, only more ferociously. Straw then proposes curfews for young people; Howard demands curfews with electronic tagging. Tomayto, tomayto, curfew, me too, let's call the whole thing off. At least in the U.S. elections last year there were still a few cultural differences between the parties—affirmative action, gay weddings, English as an official language. Not here. In 1987, Blair called privatization the "closest thing, postwar, to political corruption." Now, despite having voted against every single privatization bill since 1979, Labour is cheerfully proposing to privatize anything it can find.

For those who can't stand the metooness of it, there are all kinds of malcontents' parties on the ballot this time, johnny-come-latelies to Screaming Lord Sutch's long-standing Monster Raving Loony Party. There's the Natural Law Party, which believes in better government through "yogic flying"—that is to say, bouncing vigorously up and down on mattresses. If that worked, the Tories would be a shoo-in. Otherwise, for those opposed to the European Union, there are both the United Kingdom Independence Party and the Referendum Party. The latter is run by Sir James Goldsmith, a billionaire who boldly proclaims that he's a proud English patriot, as the domestic staff at his homes in France, Spain, and Mexico will gladly testify. For someone who frets about foreign domination, he does talk in the strangely modulated manner of exotic James Bond villains bent on world domination: "Your sense of humor seems to be contagious, Mr. Major," he said coolly the other night. "But this government has betrayed the nation. It will therefore be punished on May 1."

THERE are votes in the European issue, but, given that hitherto most of the differences have been contained within parties, it's hard to know how they will fall. To test the mood of Middle England, I went to the village of Kineton, which falls within the Stratford-on-Avon constituency. Kineton is a picturesque little Warwickshire village of thatched cottages and winding streets, but, as night fell, so did its quotient of picturesqueness. The streets emptied, sullen groups of bored adolescents appeared outside the old cemetery, the village stores hunkered down behind metal barricades. Broadly speaking, no matter how you finesse the figures, crime has doubled since 1979. The police have been showered with more pay, shorter hours, zippier helicopters, state-of-the-art water cannons—and yet the number of convictions has fallen by a third. There are more police per capita than in the United States, and yet much higher rates of property crime and auto theft. Britain already has more security cameras than anywhere else in the Western world, and all they do is ensure that the odd theft or rape is caught on grainy monochrome; it doesn't deter anything. Who, I mused at the Kineton Village Hall, would want to live like this, barricaded into their homes by a battery of laser alarms, window locks, and closed-circuit surveillance equipment? In my naïve New Hampshire way I'd much rather have a gun and shoot intruders dead. "Outrageous!" a local couple told me. "That's why you've got all that crime in America."

But we've got *less* than you . . .

"Utter rot! Everyone knows you're the worst in the world." And so saying, in his quaint English village, a quarter-mile

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from his leafy Tudor manor, off he went to check that he'd fitted his Club correctly.

At a meeting with John Maples, the Tory candidate for Stratford-on-Avon, no one seemed interested in Labour; there were older enemies at the gates. "Germany is getting too big," said Doreen. "We don't want to get in a gang with this great bully"—a sentiment heartily endorsed. Mr. Maples was reluctant to commit himself to the Third World War but, after a handful of similar questions, decided to string along, cautiously: "Well, for over a hundred years, Europe has had a German problem," he said. "It was easier to manage when we split her in two . . ."

"Why don't we split her in four then?" hissed the old boy next to me.

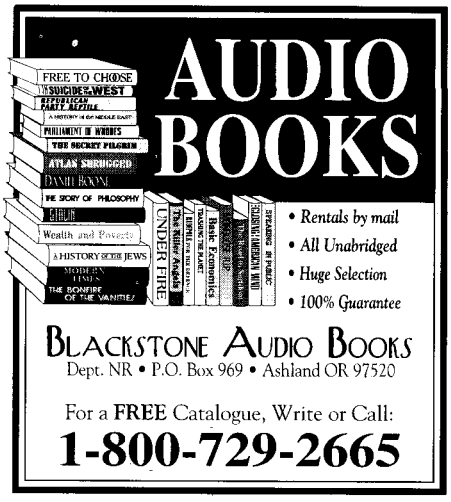
They were an elderly crowd—average age 78—but they're the last romantics, the last generation not crippled by postwar British fatalism. Yes, the rest of Britain agrees, the EU fisheries policy has destroyed our fishing fleets; yes, the EU agricultural policy adds over a thousand pounds to the British housewife's annual food budget; yes, the EU's crippling social costs will send our manufacturing industry to the Far East; yes, we don't make anything the Continentals want to buy anyway. And yet, where else can we go? Can the oldtimers turn the tide? Several Tory candidates, finding Tony Blair too slippery a target, have decorated their leaflets with mugshots of Chancellor Kohl. "Our Next Leader? No!"

EVEN more bizarrely, Blair has the support of Rupert Murdoch and his top tabloid, of the conservative commentator Paul Johnson, and even (according to Johnson) of Mrs. Thatcher. Certainly, Blair is following the same devastating campaign strategy Mrs. Thatcher used in the Eighties: he takes every opportunity to pour scorn on Labour—"old" Labour, pre-Blair, that is; just as Mrs. Thatcher staked her claim on having vanquished the Argies and the unions, so Blair stakes his on having vanquished Labour. The Tories would rather fight the Hun, Blair would rather fight his own party: it's no wonder the election hasn't caught fire.

This election will have a low turnout, and it will be lost by the party whose apathetics are the best organized. Even as a media election, it doesn't quite work, judging from the difficulty they're having selling TV airtime. In the middle of a discussion on Scottish electoral issues the other night, the host cut to a dark brown voice purring, "If you want to talk man to man . . .": a fetching brunette boy gently caressing a blond lad appeared, and underneath the phone number of Gay-X-Change. After watching four earnest Scotswomen discuss devolution for an hour, I can only say the blond guy looked pretty good to me.

Not many of us would wish to sit down in a bar with a Conservative MP. They are not attractive people, and they have blood on their hands. To eject a serving Prime Minister, as they did to Mrs. Thatcher in 1990, is a constitutional affront. Psychologically, the Conservatives did their best to lose the 1992 election, understanding in some dim subconscious way their need to atone for their act of matricide. To their surprise, they won, and, ashamed of their victory, have spent the next five years doing their best to self-destruct. John Major's entire premiership has been an ongoing *Perils of Pauline* serial: each week in the Sunday papers, he's hanging from the cliff by his fingernails, only to miraculously survive to hang from the cliff by his fingernails again the following weekend. If any man deserves another five years of such futile torture it's John Major: after all, his premiership has had little other function than its own survival—"I'm Still Here," as a Sondheim song puts it. But there are still real choices in this election: a hung Parliament, with Labour dependent on LibDem support, would plunge the country into the biggest constitutional upheaval since the 1832 Reform Act—the destruction of the House of Lords, a parliament for Scotland, a senate for Wales, regional assemblies for England, proportional representation for the House of Commons. Better a huge Labour victory than that. Better still a re-elected Conservative government, with its Euroskeptic fiber renewed.

Can it be done? As I write, the polls show a slight wobble in Labour's lead, suggesting their majority might be cut from over 200 seats to—gasp!—a mere 159. It's not much to go on, but it's a start. Mrs. Thatcher campaigned like *Attack of the 50-Foot Woman*; Major prefers being the underdog, a better strategy in campaigning than governing. Major has a gender gap to exploit—women, it seems, don't care for "phony Tony." But the British electorate are a lazy lot; they never, in their hearts, signed up for the Thatcher Revolution; they were content to play along while house prices were spiraling into the sky, and it seemed that the entire British populace could get by on selling the same undistinguished suburban houses back and forth to each other for increasingly crazy six-figure sums. It would have been a unique triumph of capitalism had it worked, but, when the market slumped and the British realized that Thatcherite economics depended on things like getting to work before 10:30 in the morning, they lost heart. More Major means more rows at home and rows in Europe. Blair offers the prospect of a quiet life. Read his lips: no new nothin'. □



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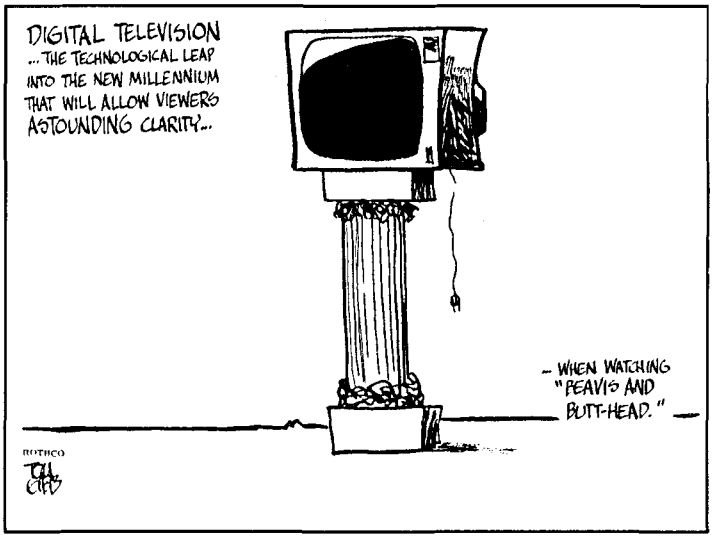
help!!!!

The Juggernaut

Kemp, you will recall, pitched coal.
Dole controlled the throttle.
Barbour, in the parlor car,
Sometimes shook his wattle.
These three, creaking down the track
In that bleak November,
Triggered Bill and Al to shill
More than they remember.

—W. H. von Dreele

"Something to assuage my liberal guilt."


DIGITAL TELEVISION ...THE TECHNOLOGICAL LEAP INTO THE NEW MILLENNIUM THAT WILL ALLOW VIEWERS ASTOUNDING CLARITY...
...WHEN WATCHING "BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD."
ROTHCO

"I'm leaving you Geoffrey. You're far too good for me."

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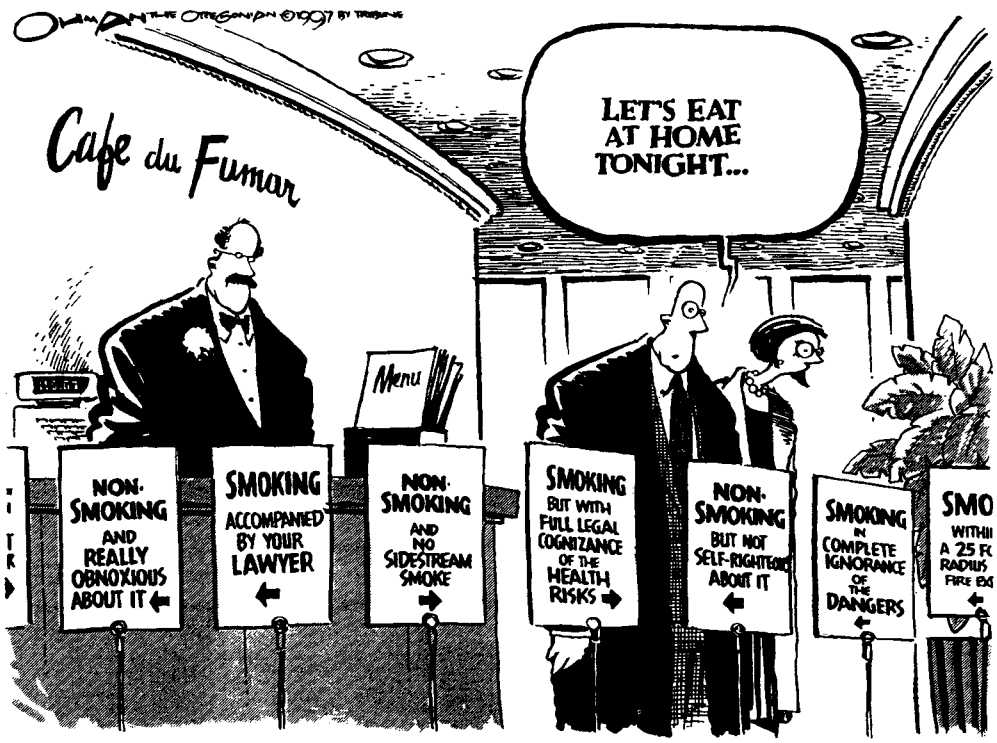
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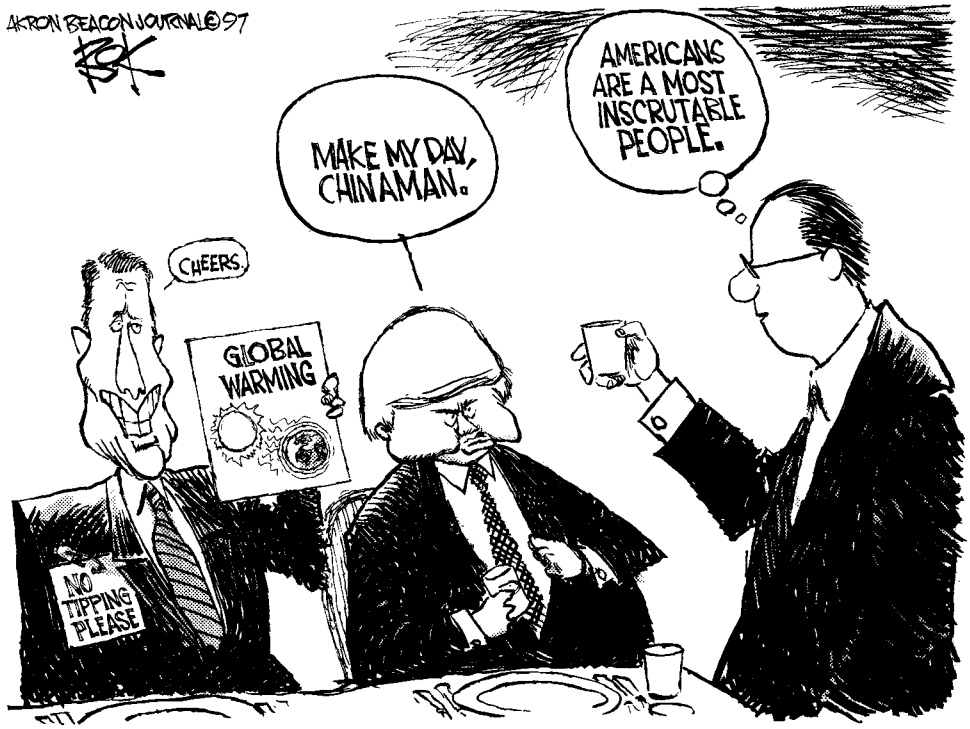
NON-SMOKING AND NO SIDESTREAM SMOKE
SMOKING BUT WITH FULL LEGAL COGNIZANCE OF THE HEALTH RISKS
NON-SMOKING BUT NOT SELF-RIGHTEOUS ABOUT IT
SMOKING IN COMPLETE IGNORANCE OF THE DANGERS



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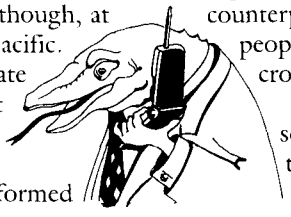
GEKKO

THE Japanese banking crisis unfolds like one of those slow-motion explosions in a Sam Peckinpah movie, like *The Wild Bunch* or *Straw Dogs*. The Japanese crisis is generating a lot more useless talk than Sam would have tolerated, though, at least on their side of the Pacific. But so much of our own fate turns on the outcome that I've decided to start paying attention to it.



Far and away the best informed person writing about the Japanese banking crisis is Jeff Uscher of *Grant's Asia Observer*. I have my differences with him about a couple of points, but the burden of proof lies with people who disagree with the way he lays out the facts.

At the moment the outcome turns on how the Japanese government will deal with the insolvency of the Nippon Credit Bank. I use the term "Japanese government" deliberately, not "Japan, Inc." or "the Japanese establishment" because those two terms have lost some of their meaning in the course of the Nippon Credit crisis. The Japanese banks and life insurers are being asked to pay for at least part of what will probably turn out to be the first stage of the effective liquidation of the bank, to the tune of $565 million from the banks and $1.2 billion from the life insurers. These are "investments" in the same sense that spending on Clinton's AmeriCorps program is an "investment." None of the "investors" will ever see that money again. Neither, by the way, will the securities houses that have had to swallow huge losses on underwriting Nippon Credit paper in the public market. The sound financial institutions don't think they should pay, and keep paying, for Nippon Credit's failures. The government, though, lacks the authority, people, and worked-out plan that would be needed for a rescue.

But we're talking here about one of the 15 largest Japanese banks, right? Yes, but not every penny of Nippon Credit's loans and debentures wound up in the best of hands. Among its customers was the late Shin Kanematu, who was a sort of combination of John Gotti and Bob Strauss: big crime meets big politics. A friend of mine remarked on how understaffed Nippon Credit's headquarters were compared to its counterparts. "But then, how many people do you need to document crooked loans?"

Not much of this is really a secret in Japan, which is why the public doesn't think it should pay several tens of billions to save Nippon Credit. As a practical matter, though, there are a whole bunch of regional banks that own a large portion of its $77 billion in outstanding debentures. If it goes down, then some of them could go down. After that, who knows?

Here's where Jeff Uscher and I disagree. He takes note of the lack of consensus within the Japanese government about who will take the heat for a bailout. So he thinks the debentures will be paid out on only a small fraction of their value, with some of that coming in the form of Monopoly money. My feeling is that while the cost of a flat-out rescue of the bank would be huge and as unpopular as Janet Reno at a militia meeting, it is at least finite and calculable, unlike a bank collapse. Somebody can be tossed from the window of the Ministry of Finance to the angry mob below—after the bailout. The consequences of no bailout, while incalculable, would certainly be larger.

"Had a rough day today, dear?"

Jeff thinks the current low price of the NCB's debentures—around 88 cents on the dollar for last month's issue—reflects the chances of a rescue. I think it might have more to do with the lack of a market for junk in Japan, not to mention the absence of vulture investors.

We'll see who's right within a month or so. Where Jeff and I agree is that a generalized failure of the Japanese banking system would have terrible consequences beyond Japan's shores. It would, however, do a lot for the value of the dollar, and you could start the egg timer on when to begin a massive buy of Japanese stocks. A total bailout, on the other hand, would crash the Japanese Government Bond, and probably do a lot for the gold market.

■ What is it about Maria Bartiromo? I seem to get more calls each day from traders about the CNBC stock-exchange correspondent than I do about Alan Greenspan. There are other attractive reporters on the network, which plays in the background of every American trading room, but none seem to stimulate the fantasy life of male speculators the way Maria does. I've met her a couple of times, and she's very much the nice girl next door if next door is in the New York area. Maybe it's some bio-electronic effect of TV screens interacting with banks of phones, but somehow she has become the Sharon Stone of business cable.

■ For an indication of Chinese strategic intentions, Simon Hunt, a British mining expert who in the form of Simon Hunt Strategic Services provides excellent research on the copper market, offers a useful measure: how much copper the Chinese buy for their "social reserves." If the government continues with a long-term buying program of 600,000 to 700,000 metric tons this year in the face of higher prices, then it is likely that it is planning the sort of adventurism a couple of years out that would lead to trade sanctions. If, on the other hand, China moderates the state buying to take the pressure off the price of civilian imports, then it may be planning on a more moderate course.

My unsolicited foreign-policy advice? Keep trading—i.e., renew MFN—and reinforce our military position in Asia.

—JOHN DIZARD

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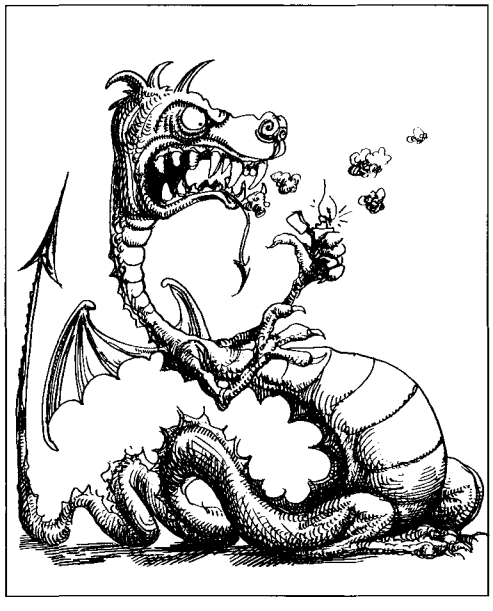
THE ANTI-CHINA SYNDROME

How Not to Handle China

As China grows in economic and military power, Americans are asking whether it is our competitor or our enemy.

OWEN HARRIES

SINCE the end of the Cold War, many Americans have been suffering from an enemy-deprivation syndrome. This is not surprising. After all, for fifty years they had experienced a clearly identified, formidable, and generally agreed upon enemy. That enemy provided a simply grasped organizing principle for thinking about foreign policy, and its sudden disappearance threatened disorientation and discord. It imbued foreign policy with a sense of heroic moral purpose, and without it things seemed likely to become mundane and boring.



Whatever the mixture of motives, as soon as the initial euphoria over the Soviet Union's collapse had passed, most of the American foreign-policy cognoscenti—and especially a large section of its conservative component—began to search for a substitute enemy. For a short while, Japan was favored. Scores of authoritative books and hundreds of closely argued articles were written about the impending "clash" between it and the United States. But then a Japan that had been presented as an irresistible juggernaut suddenly faltered. Its economy lost momentum, its politics became a shambles, and it was no longer a credible enemy.

Temporarily at a loss, some then tried to fill the gap by a process of aggregation. If a single powerful and convincing enemy was not available then perhaps several small ones added together might do—North Korea, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Serbia, and so on. But it soon became clear that a lizard, a hyena, and a couple of skunks did not add up to a dragon. Nor did Islamic fundamentalism really work, for, again, its multiple, divided agents lacked the heft and presence to be convincing rivals.

At this point some turned back to Russia as a dependable candidate for the role of principal enemy. True, its economy was in a pitiful state, its military performance in Chechnya was abysmal, and its whole social fabric was in tatters; but it certainly resonated, and if one was prepared to take the long view it still had adversarial potential. That, at least, seemed to be the assumption of those who took up the cause of the eastward expansion of NATO with enthusiasm. As one of the most honest of them—Peter Rodman—put it, "The only potential great-power security problem in Central Europe is the lengthening shadow of Russian strength. . . . Russia is a force of nature; all this is inevitable."

But although Russia is potentially dangerous and needs careful handling, in the way that a wounded animal does, a declining ex-superpower making a serious stab at becoming a democracy is not really well suited to play the role of a principal enemy. Certainly it does not capture a combative imagination with the same conviction as a coming superpower that is performing spectacularly economically, that is still governed by an obnoxious regime, that frequently says nasty things about the United States, and that encompasses over one-fifth of the earth's population—which is to say, China.

It is not surprising, then, that there is now widespread support for the view that China is America's main enemy, that the two countries are on a collision course, and that the only sensible policy for the United States to follow is a tough and hostile one. In the words of *The New Republic*'s editors, we "must engage China adversarially." Anything else will amount to appeasement or "coddling."

Things may indeed turn out that way. Perhaps China really is evil, hostile, and aggressive. But there is another possibility, and it is that asserting these things will be self-fulfilling. If you insist on treating another country as an enemy, it is likely to become one. All the more reason, then, to look carefully at the arguments advanced for treat-

Mr. Harries is the editor of the National Interest.

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ing China in this way, and to consider what can be said against them.

1. China as Aspiring Global Hegemon. "Most experts agree," the editors of *The Weekly Standard* assure us, "that China aims . . . in the long term to challenge America's position as the dominant power in the world."

China's supposed appetite for global power is based on *no* empirical evidence whatsoever. China has been singularly unambitious beyond its region. Its most conspicuous venture in this respect was a half-hearted and incompetent effort to establish a presence in Africa more than three decades ago. True, in recent years China has sold arms to a number of countries outside the region, but if that is to be taken as evidence of hegemonic ambitions, then a number of Western powers—even Israel and Sweden—would qualify.

The global-hegemony claim is based essentially not on empirical evidence but on a "logic of the system" argument, which maintains that rivalry is inevitable between the dominant power and the next strongest state, especially if the latter is an ascendant power. In their new book, *The Coming Conflict with China*, Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro set this out explicitly: "China, soon to be the globe's second most powerful nation, will be a predominating force as the world takes shape in the new millennium, and, as such, it is bound to be no longer a strategic friend of the United States but a long-term adversary." The words "as such, it is bound to be" assume an ineluctable logic of cause and effect. Sometimes (though not by Bernstein and Munro) this claim is bolstered by reference to the notorious Anglo–German rivalry at the beginning of this century, when England as the dominant power was challenged by the German *arriviste*.

WHAT is to be said about this systemic argument? First, it is true that a certain amount of friction between a hegemon in being and a rapidly rising state is virtually inevitable. Indeed, a certain amount of friction between *any* two powerful states that have regular intercourse is inevitable. But that by no means implies an unavoidable and continuing adversarial relationship. At the time of the Anglo–German rivalry there existed another—and, in the long run, more formidable—challenger to British supremacy, namely the United States. Yet Britain and the United States did not become deadly enemies; on the contrary, they got on rather well and ultimately became allies. That relationship alone refutes the "inevitable" argument—and serves as a reminder that the Anglo–German rivalry required an exceptionally vain and foolish Kaiser Wilhelm in order to flourish.

One further point: Americans, more than any other people, should be wary of arguing that being or aspiring to be a global hegemon is necessarily evidence of sin and sufficient cause for enmity. For were that so, every state in the world would have cause to regard the United States as its enemy.

2. China as Aspiring Regional Hegemon. The charge that China is set on becoming a regional hegemon *is* based on empirical evidence: on an alleged pattern of assertive, intimidatory, and acquisitive behavior, particularly toward Taiwan, Japan, and certain islands in the South China Sea. What can be said about this evidence?

First, to the extent that China is assertive in its region, there is nothing peculiar or pathological in its behavior. This is the way ascending powers—democratic as well as authoritarian—normally behave. If their efforts become egregious, they have to be checked; if they are reasonably modest and restrained, it is wise to cut them some slack.

Second, by historical standards, China's recent and current assertiveness *is* modest. Taiwan apart (of which more below), it has mainly manifested itself with respect to uninhabited or sparsely inhabited islands whose ownership is in dispute: the Senkaku Islands (claimed by China, Japan, and Taiwan), the Paracel Islands (claimed by China and Vietnam), and Mischief Reef in the Spratly Islands (claimed by China and the Philippines).

Indeed, a certain amount of friction between any two powerful states that have regular intercourse is inevitable.

Even if Chinese restraint does not necessarily reflect modest ambition, it does represent a rational and healthy sense of the power realities that will continue to exist well into the next century. We are, after all, talking about a country that, as Robert S. Ross pointed out in the March/April issue of *Foreign Affairs*, does not possess a single aircraft carrier, and will not possess one for a decade or so. The South China Sea is strategically important, and should the Chinese attempt to dominate it, they would have to be reminded of their very limited capacity to project power. But, in the meantime, vigilance rather than enmity is what is required.

Third, Taiwan is a special case. Handling the issue has involved an implicit bargain: Peking will leave the island alone to enjoy de facto autonomy as long as Washington and Taipei do not force the issue of its ultimate status. When China mounted a major show of force against Taiwan in March 1996, it was not in an effort to upset the balance represented by that bargain but as a reaction to its having been already upset by Taipei and Washington—by President Lee's campaign to have Taiwan readmitted to the United Nations (which would have been tantamount to recognizing its independence), by the Clinton Administration's allowing President Lee to visit the United States and so burnish Taiwan's independent image, and by a $6-million sale of F-16 fighter planes to Taiwan. Ill-judged, ugly, and dangerous as was the Chinese intimidation, it was a *reaction*. It was not evidence of a determination to change the status quo. While the United States has a political, moral, and economic interest in safeguarding the de facto autonomy of Taiwan, there is ground for thinking long and hard—about the costs that would be involved and what American interests would be served—before assuming any obligation to support its formal independence.

One further point about Taiwan: While Americans tend to think of the issue primarily as a political question involv-

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ing legal status and freedom from outside interference—and it is certainly that—for the Chinese it is also, and unavoidably, a major strategic issue. For, as Ross reminds us, the island is indeed the equivalent of an "unsinkable aircraft carrier," only ninety or so miles off China's coast. To the extent that Americans are sensitive about Castro's Cuba (which is badly armed compared to Taiwan, and which has had no superpower patron for the last six years), they should be able to appreciate China's apprehension about Taiwan.

3. The Chinese Arms Buildup. Much is made of what *The New Republic* calls China's "program of massive militarization," a program that it is alleged to be implementing "frantically." *The Weekly Standard* emphasizes that "China is the only major world power increasing rather than decreasing its defense spending." Arthur Waldron, writing in *Commentary*, sees this as "part and parcel of the regime's major shift . . . toward repression and irredentism."

China certainly has increased its defense budget, though how much of that increase reflects inflation and the need to keep the military content through increased pay is in dispute among specialists. Certainly, too, there have been serious and successful efforts to acquire modern weaponry from Russia and Europe: SU-27 fighter aircraft, quiet submarines, destroyers equipped with cruise missiles, and so on.

THAT said, these points are relevant: 1) The increases have been made to a defense budget that had been severely depressed by the prolonged economic calamity of the Cultural Revolution. 2) The modernization was to replace an arsenal that was antiquated. Just how far behind the Chinese were became fully and shockingly evident to them through America's swift and militarily crushing victory in the Gulf War. 3) The buildup also reflects the unusual conjunction of the availability of greatly increased funds on the Chinese side and the ready availability of modern weapons for sale on the Russian side. 4) However "massive" the Chinese program is, the U.S. defense budget is still as large as the next five or six largest defense budgets in the world combined. 5) Given the backwardness of Chinese technology and the limitation of what can be achieved by purchases abroad, it will take a long time for China to acquire a defense force that is fully modernized, even in today's sense of that term. *The New Republic* editorializes that "It is only a matter of decades before China becomes the other military superpower on earth." But as Harold Wilson so nearly said, a "matter of decades" is a long time in politics. By the time those decades have passed, the United States itself will have made further vast technological advances.

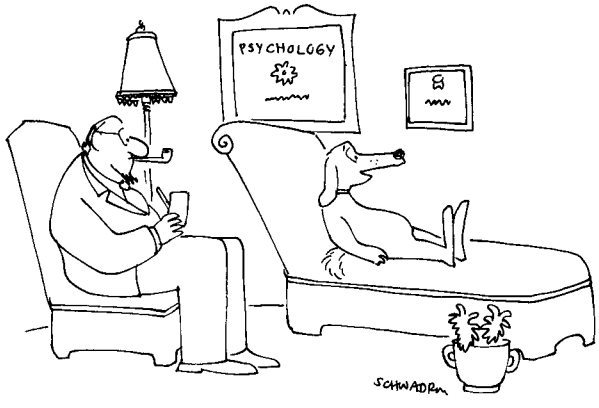
4. China as Human Rights Violator. One justification for hostility toward China, and perhaps the one with the greatest popular appeal, is that its regime is oppressive and shows little respect for human rights.

How concern for human rights translates into foreign policy is a complicated matter. While individuals or single-issue organizations are free to take an absolute position on the question, governments are not. Governments have to balance the claims of human rights against other concerns which also have a moral content (peace, security, order, prosperity). Their place in the hierarchy of interests will vary—sometimes it will be high, sometimes it will have to give way to other compelling interests. To the moral absolutist the result will seem cynical, and governments regularly invite such a response because they persist in speaking of human rights in absolutist terms that they cannot, in the nature of things, honor.

True, there will be some terrible occasions when the violation of human rights will be so horrendous that the absolutist moral approach becomes—or should become—compelling. Such was the case with the murderous regimes of Hitler and Stalin. But mercifully they are the exceptions, not the rule. China today does not constitute such an exception. According to Bernstein and Munro, the best estimate of the number of political prisoners in China currently is 3,000. In a population of 1.3 billion, this amounts to 0.00023 per cent, which is hardly the equivalent of the Gulag or the Nazi concentration camps. Ironically, back in the early 1970s, when most Americans, liberals and realists alike, were enthusiastically applauding the U.S. opening to China, the Maoist regime *was* in the same league as the Hitlerite and Stalinist regimes.

China today can more reasonably be compared to Indonesia or Saudi Arabia—or India. Of the latter, a recent Council on Foreign Relations report states: "Thousands of Kashmiris have been killed by the security forces. On occasion Indian units have used lethal force against peaceful demonstrators and burned down entire neighborhoods." It is perhaps worth noting that, far from suggesting that the United States should condemn and penalize India, this report recommends that we develop a "closer strategic relationship" with that country. While one would certainly not want to make a similar proposal in the case of China, it would seem sensible to stop short of ostracism.

One last point: While China's human-rights performance continues to be poor, in important respects the trend is positive. There have been significant improvements in terms of the rule of law, grass-roots democracy, and media freedom. Already it is absurd to apply the term "totalitarian" to the regime, as *The New Republic* does. While nothing is certain, and while there is no established direct causal relationship between economic advance and political liberalization, there is certainly a strong correlation between the two. There are therefore real grounds for being



"It's no use. I'll never be able to catch my tail."

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optimistic about the likelihood that freedom and respect for human rights in China will increase steadily—perhaps dramatically—over the next decade.

5. The Hostility of China's Political Elite. Bernstein and Munro place a great deal of emphasis on the character of the Chinese ruling elite in explaining the hostility that exists between China and the United States. That elite has become strongly anti-American. It shows a pattern of "irritability, defensiveness, harshness, and defiance of American opinion." It uses words like "hegemonism," "subversion," and "interference" with regard to the United States. This elderly elite is characterized as secretive, intolerant, reflexively defensive, and chauvinistic.

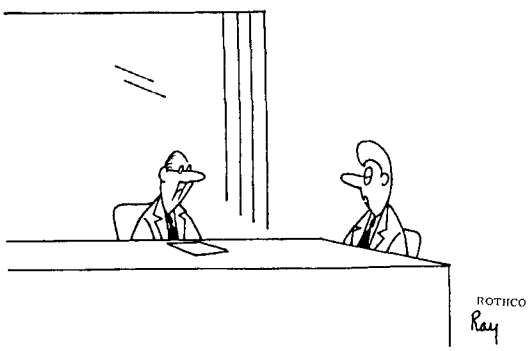
During the second half of the Cold War, these characteristics and the anti-Americanism that flowed from them were held in check by the need for American support against a threatening Russia. But now, with that threat removed and with China's power rapidly increasing, the elite feels no need to keep its true feelings secret. Indeed, they can be turned to advantage. For with Communism dead, there is need for a substitute ideology to mobilize support and legitimize the power of the elite. What better substitute than the true and tried formula of emotional, chauvinistic nationalism, directed against an alien superpower?

This analysis deserves at least three comments. First, it may well contain significant elements of truth. But, second, with a closed and secretive elite it is difficult to be certain what those elements are. We knew, or thought we knew, much more about the Soviet elite (all those years of dedicated Kremlinology!) than we know about the Chinese elite—and yet almost all of us were utterly surprised by its supine behavior in the final crisis of the Soviet system. That experience alone should counsel caution in basing policy on one's supposed understanding of the psychology and motivation of a closed and secretive elite.

A third point also suggests caution. The charges that the Chinese elite directs against the United States are in many respects strikingly similar to the charges that Bernstein and Munro (and other Americans) make against the Chinese. Each accuses the other of hegemonistic designs, interference, threatening behavior, military buildup, and the like. This raises the question of what, in each case, is cause and what is effect. Americans quote Chinese statements to establish that the United States must reconcile itself to the enmity of Peking; but it is very likely that analysts in China are simultaneously quoting Bernstein and Munro to establish that American enmity must be taken as a given. Is there not the real danger of a vicious circle here?

6. China's Interference in American Domestic Politics. The inclination to treat China as an enemy has been significantly strengthened by the current charges of Chinese government interference in America's domestic political process. There is no reason to doubt that these charges are true. That said, however, outrage should be tempered by the recognition that if such interference justifies condemnation, then many, many countries have grounds for condemning the United States. For over fifty years the United States has itself interfered in the domestic affairs of other countries on a more or less regular basis—not only Third World countries and not only dictatorships, but developed Western countries, including democracies. The Christian Democratic Party of Italy, for example, was massively supported by the CIA in its early days, and there has been much intervention in the domestic affairs of countries as varied as Greece, Chile, and the Philippines.

I am aware that pointing this out is likely to draw the charge that one is assuming a "moral equivalence." But if it is not to become an intimidatory device inhibiting free discussion, this is a charge that has to be resorted to with great care. If the United States is always treated as a special case, if what is condemned in others is condoned in America's case because its superior ends justify means that would otherwise be unacceptable, it becomes difficult to discuss issues sensibly. What may have been appropriate in the exceptional circumstances of coping with the "evil empire" of yesterday is not appropriate in the more mundane world of today.



"I'm not a self-starter, I'm afraid of a little hard work, and I want to start at the top."

IN THEIR article "Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy" (*Foreign Affairs*, July/August 1996), William Kristol and Robert Kagan maintained that "it is hard to imagine conservatives achieving a lasting political realignment in this country without . . . a coherent set of foreign-policy principles that at least bear some resemblance to those proposed by Reagan. The remoralization of America at home ultimately requires the remoralization of American foreign policy." Again, they argue that "Deprived of the support of an elevated patriotism, bereft of the ability to appeal to national honor, conservatives will ultimately fail in their effort to govern America."

This represents an interesting approach to foreign policy, one that seems to start with the political needs of conservatives rather than the national interest of the United States. Given the title of the Kristol–Kagan article, it should be pointed out that this was not Ronald Reagan's approach to foreign policy. His priority was defeating the evil empire, an enemy in being, not finding a foreign policy that would serve conservative interests.

More to the point, the kind of priority represented by Kristol and Kagan—the need to find a stirring cause that will "remoralize" America—is almost certain to produce an enemy and identify an inspiring conflict between good and evil. As Walter Lippmann once observed, "For the most part we do not first see and then define, we define first and then we see." It is difficult to escape the conclusion that something of this sort typifies much current American thinking about China. It is a dangerous approach to foreign policy. □

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And How To Handle China

PETER W. RODMAN

THE debate on China is one of the hottest in a long time.

Supporters of "engagement" include the business community, free-market advocates, and prominent Republican former officials who argue that a confrontation now with China would be premature. They are joined by foreign-policy analysts of the "realist" school.

As for the *Administration*, it is easy to make fun of Mr. Clinton's conversion from a candidate who attacked George Bush's "coddling of dictators" to a President who has striven mightily to restore a comprehensive partnership with China. Vice President Gore's visit to Peking was only the curtain-raiser to an exchange of presidential visits planned for this year and next, and decisions coming up on Chinese membership in the World Trade Organization and non-discriminatory trade status for China (called "most-favored-nation" treatment, or MFN).

As the Administration's schedule of happy events unfolds, it faces a crescendo of controversy far beyond what it bargained for. The opposition consists of an unusual combination of liberals, conservatives, and neoconservatives.

Conservatives never abandoned their loyalty to the anti-Communist remnant on Taiwan or their antipathy to the Communist regime even during the 25 years of Sino–American geopolitical partnership. The value of that partnership in the struggle with the Soviet Union was not doubted, but conservatives held their collective noses the whole time (to the extent that they do anything collectively).

Liberals, meanwhile, were shocked, absolutely shocked, to learn in 1989 that China was a Communist state. Until then, they had had a romantic view of the Maoist juggernaut, coupled with a bizarre sense of American guilt for the estrangement of earlier decades. Today, many liberals denounce Peking on human rights and embrace Taiwan.

Leading the charge today are the *neoconservatives*. Their case is twofold. First, they see the Chinese regime as the last of the evil empires of the twentieth century, whose demise is required if democracy is truly to be vindicated in our time. Second, they seek a crystallizing issue at home to mobilize the Republicans in particular and the country in general behind a wholesale critique of the Clinton foreign policy, capturing the moral and political high ground as Henry Jackson and Ronald Reagan did by their 1970 assault on "détente."

Mr. Rodman, an NR *senior editor, is the author of* Broken Triangle: Russia, China, and America after 25 Years *(Nixon Center for Peace and Freedom, forthcoming), from which this is excerpted.*

Whether the old anti-détente juices can be gotten to flow again so powerfully is an open question. The American people seem less rousable these days, and the China issue is as likely to divide the Republican constituency as to galvanize it.

There is wisdom in many of the neoconservatives' points: that China aspires to regional dominance, that it is a strategic challenge for the U.S. more than a strategic partner, and that the regime's longevity and legitimacy should not be treated as givens. Cuts in U.S. defense spending suggest a lack of seriousness.

The main weakness of the neoconservative campaign is the thinness of its operational prescriptions. This was more or less conceded in January in *The Weekly Standard*, which called for a congressional challenge on China policy but then went on almost apologetically:

> It is hard for Congress to make foreign policy (and sometimes unwise), but Congress can at least assure real public debate. . . . Republicans . . . will have to make tactical choices, for example about where and how to link trade and moral concerns. But here there will be . . . the refreshing opportunity to . . . talk about freedom and international standards of morality.

While growing numbers of conservatives and neoconservatives want to deny MFN, many Republicans doubt that MFN is usable any more as leverage. Cutting off normal trade is too much like a nuclear weapon—it would do enormous collateral damage (to U.S. businesses, to Hong Kong, etc.). Thus the search is on for more "targeted" sanctions: some proposals would penalize commercial enterprises of the Chinese military, or crack down on their procurement in the U.S.; others would deny visas to officials responsible for religious persecution. There should be no illusion, however, that such measures would change the regime. The experience of the Jackson–Vanik Amendment on Soviet Jewish emigration is a warning of the risks of using legislative vehicles for ambitious ideological purposes. (While Jackson–Vanik was pending, it was useful leverage; once it was enacted in rigid form, the Soviets renounced MFN and curtailed emigration.)

THE Chinese challenge can only be met by a comprehensive, long-term national policy. It is a matter of strategy, not tactics.

If China is calculating that the U.S. is a declining power, then a paramount requirement of U.S. policy can be summed up in one idea: to prove this premise wrong. If the Chinese are counting on a vacuum of American power that they can fill, then it is in our hands to leave no such vacuum. Anyone who raises alarms about China and acquiesces in the gutting of our defense posture should be disqualified from participation in the debate.

The main foreign-policy requirement is that we maintain our *alliances and other links in the region* in order to strengthen counterweights—Japan, South Korea, ANZUS, ASEAN, Taiwan—and reinforce a regional equilibrium.

Ballistic missile defenses are essential for our friends (including Taiwan). That missile defenses were singled out for criticism by the Chinese foreign minister in his UN

(Continues on page 61)

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CIVIL RIGHTS *v.* PUBLIC SAFETY

Disabling America

As new laws hit the workplace, liberals change their tune: Maybe safety isn't so important after all.

WALTER OLSON

YOU may think I'm making this up unless I offer a verbatim quote, so here's exactly what the *Washington Post* reported in a front-page story on April 8: "In January, a former truck driver for Ryder Systems, Inc., won a $5.5-million jury verdict after claiming, under the ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act], that Ryder unfairly removed him from his position after he suffered an epileptic seizure, saying his health condition could be a safety hazard. During the time he was blocked from his job at Ryder, the driver was hired by another firm, had a seizure behind the wheel and crashed into a tree. Ryder is appealing the verdict."

That's one of many emerging cases where the right to sue employers under new civil-rights laws "may be on a collision course" with public safety, according to *Post* reporter Kirstin Downey Grimsley. For instance, the Clinton Administration's Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has filed an ADA suit against Federal Express over its policy of employing only drivers with sight in both eyes. The Department of Transportation forbids one-eyed drivers from operating big rigs; FedEx applies the same policy to drivers of its delivery trucks. The EEOC says such a rule is unlawful and is demanding that the company fork over back pay.

Years of litigation by advocacy groups and freelance employment lawyers have put customers, co-workers, and the general public alike at risk:

—Physically incapable, mentally unstable, and alcoholic or addicted employees have again and again used new laws to hold onto safety-sensitive positions. The Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled that a Boston police recruit had the right to lie on his job application to conceal a record of repeated hospitalizations as a psychiatric in-patient. Ship's officers have won suits against oil companies for the right to command vessels despite serious boozing pasts; Northwest Airlines rehired a pilot who had flown passengers while drunk.

—Contagious disease carries protected status too. UCLA hospital officials knew a heart surgeon was infected with the serious and highly transmissible hepatitis-B virus; he went on to spread the virus to 18 patients. "The hospital's decision to allow the surgeon to keep on operating even after he was found to be infected," it was explained, was "in compliance with federal regulations." Prominent disabled-rights advocate and former Ted Kennedy staffer Laurence Gostin has declared that, "seen through the lens of the ADA, public-health regulation may be regarded as discrimination against people with disabilities."

—Workers' inability to read safety warnings or comprehend verbal instructions has led to accidents on the job, yet employers are under legal pressure not to turn away workers on the grounds that their proficiency in English is poor. One manual warns employers that if they want to stay on the law's safe side they shouldn't demand more English proficiency than they're prepared to prove is necessary to fill a particular position: "Sometimes only a very rudimentary vocabulary—'stop,' 'don't,' 'look out,' etc.—is all that is needed to perform a job."

The reaction in progressive circles? "Advocates for the disabled," reports Kirstin Downey Grimsley, say that "even if there is an increased risk, society must accept it as the price of creating a fairer workplace for the disabled." "We can't live in a risk-free world," said Chai Feldblum, a law professor and American Civil Liberties Union activist who helped draft the ADA. Pretty ironic, since in other contexts it's thought suitable to demand punitive damages from a business that tolerated even the slightest elevation of an injury risk—by

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GREAT MOMENTS IN THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Mr. Olson is a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute and author of the forthcoming The Excuse Factory *(Free Press).*

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serving coffee at any temperature above tepid, for instance.

Invariably, backers of the new laws cite language that seems to let employers take safety concerns into account. But in practice, employers act on such exceptions only at dire legal risk.

Thus the ADA allows employers to refuse a job to persons who would "pose a direct threat to the health or safety of other individuals in the workplace." In a famous case, GTE tried to fire a computer team leader who had stolen thousands of dollars from his colleagues' desks and purses and had brought a loaded gun to the Tampa office. He sued, claiming his actions had arisen from a "chemical imbalance" that GTE was obliged to accommodate. Federal judge Elizabeth Kovachevich allowed his suit to proceed.

Feminist litigators have applied similar paralysis-by-analysis tactics in order to eviscerate strength tests for prospective firefighters, police, and other public-safety officers. Strength testing is rife with "disparate impact" because inherent physiological differences between the sexes are so profound: in Chicago's 1985 fire exam, the highest-ranking woman placed 1,200th among 7,500 applicants. Upper-body strength, important for such tasks as lifting hoses and smashing down doors, shows an especially wide gap: the fittest one-fifth of women roughly match the strength of the least fit one-fifth of men.

Seldom is it declared openly that the goal is to end testing; the problem is said to be that the particular test in question is insufficiently "validated." That's how advocates can get courts to second-guess tests to death, as in *Brunet v. Columbus* (1986). The city of Columbus had put would-be firefighters through a series of tests simulating typical fire-scene tasks, most dramatically a rescue in which applicants were asked to

From Within

AFTER voters approved the California Civil Rights Initiative last November, the local affiliate of the American Civil Liberties Union quickly sued for an injunction against its enforcement. Federal judge Thelton Henderson Jr., a former board member of the ACLU of Northern California, granted it. When Henderson's ruling was appealed, the Clinton Justice Department weighed in with a 28-page brief defending the injunction, signed by another former ACLU official, acting civil-rights chief Isabelle Katz Pinzler.

Mrs. Pinzler's emergence as the Administration's honcho on civil-rights law is emblematic of a consistent Clinton personnel policy that can be traced back as far as the failed nomination of Lani Guinier as assistant attorney general for civil rights. When the exposure of Mrs. Guinier's writing record compelled the White House to withdraw her nomination, it quickly named instead her colleague at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Deval Patrick. Though suaver in tone, Mr. Patrick soon proved to be merely Mrs. Guinier without the paper trail. And when he stepped down in January from the hot seat in the civil-rights office, it was the turn of Mrs. Pinzler, a deputy assistant attorney general since 1994, and before that longtime executive director of the ACLU's women's-rights project.

The ACLU project racked up a series of major victories in its early years under the leadership of now-Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who departed for the appeals bench in the late 1970s. Around that time, the project's focus (like the wider ACLU's) shifted toward the assertion of "economic rights" through litigation against particular employers. As the group's website (http://www.aclu.org) explains, a major Ford Foundation grant in 1975 made the new direction possible: "[I]n the late Seventies and early Eighties, we decided to concentrate on cases that would have their greatest impact on poor women and women of color. We developed a litigation docket involving non-traditional jobs: such as truck driving, the skilled trades, and production-line factory jobs." Crucial to the program was the legal attack on strength testing (see above article). The Summer 1984 issue of the ACLU publication *Civil Liberties* quoted Mrs. Pinzler as comparing firefighter strength tests to the literacy tests by which Southern states once prevented blacks from voting.

While at the ACLU, Mrs. Pinzler pursued a range of other issues as well, including the case against the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) and the campaign for the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1991, a disastrous legislative defeat for conservatives. All of which must have been good preparation for serving in Janet Reno's Justice Department, where, according to the Associated Press, "Pinzler has helped coordinate the Clinton Administration's revisions of affirmative action programs and formulate school desegregation policy."

Since becoming acting civil-rights chief in January, Mrs. Pinzler has been at few apparent pains to establish credentials as a moderate. Even the editorialists at the *New York Times* cried foul when she announced that New York City's school-board reforms might violate the Voting Rights Act by reducing minorities' clout, a position from which she soon backed off. The *New York Post* inveighed ("Babel by decree") against another remarkable ruling in which Mrs. Pinzler held that a city law requiring publicly funded candidates to engage in debates might violate the rights of non-English-speaking voters, who might not be guaranteed translations into Mandarin or Urdu of every remark by Mayor Giuliani and his challengers. And in another dubious advance for disabled rights, Mrs. Pinzler proclaimed victory in a case where two Mississippi counties had been reluctant to seat deaf persons on juries.

Some Clinton-watchers suspect the Administration is dragging its heels on naming a permanent replacement for Deval Patrick, knowing that Republican senators will closely question any nominee about stands like that against CCRI. "No one in his or her right mind would want to go through those hearings given the baggage inherited from Deval Patrick," says conservative Clint Bolick. Besides, why get into a confirmation fight when Isabelle Katz Pinzler is accomplishing so much as acting chief? When it comes to civil-rights law, the Clintonites aren't just people who listen attentively to the hard-liners of the civil-rights lobby. They *are* those hard-liners. They just get to work from inside the government these days.—WALTER OLSON

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carry a 125-pound sandbag along a twisting course. When the case reached court, federal judge Joseph Kinneary accepted the plaintiffs' contention that it was unfair for the city to count off points against recruits who chose to drag the sandbag instead of carrying it. After all, the lawyers pointed out, in smoky rooms firefighters sometimes find it safer to drag bodies to safety.

The fittest one-fifth of women roughly match the upper-body strength of the least fit one-fifth of men.

The implication was that the city should be indifferent between recruits who could use only one of the two rescue techniques and those who could use both—leaving Columbus residents to hope, next time they needed help, that the hazard in their particular room was smoke rather than glass or burning fluid on the floor. (At least they're better off than residents of San Francisco, which formerly asked recruits to carry a 150-pound sack up a flight of stairs, but now lets them drag a 40-pounder across a smooth floor.)

Judge Kinneary also disallowed the city's practice of awarding credit for *speed* in accomplishing the dummy rescue or other simulated tasks such as hoisting equipment to upper floors (men tended to finish the tasks more quickly than women). Why? Well, Kinneary wrote, again accepting the arguments of plaintiffs' lawyers, testimony had been given that "sometimes firefighters work all-out, and sometimes they pace themselves; it depends on the task at hand." In other words, they hurry only *sometimes*, and other times save their energy because they expect to need it later. From this the judge concluded that all applicants who made it through the tasks at all deserved equal ranking. The case for preferring recruits who could work quickly was merely, he said, "anecdotal." Yes, you read that right. It seems people have picked up this anecdotal idea that firefighters should do their job fast, maybe because they've heard anecdotally that fires left undoused tend to spread. Many press accounts adopted the same high-minded agnosticism about exactly what it takes to fight fires. City officials defending tests say "speed is critical" in combating blazes, reported the *New York Times*, in the best tradition of we-print-all-viewpoints journalism. "Opponents argue that it is not."

Police have fared no better. Subduing suspects by force is part of a police officer's job, but the Ninth Circuit declared it improper for Los Angeles to test police recruits for agility. In 1986 the New York Police Department agreed to drop its pre-employment physical for recruits, under threat of lawsuits. Within a few years, more than one in five city cops were considered out of shape; some hires, according to an exposé in *New York*, fell in "the almost inconceivably unfit first percentile"—that is to say, "worse than 99 per cent of others their age and gender."

Age-discrimination law, which now forbids automatic retirement at 65 in most lines of work, adds another risk dimension. When former Sen. Howard Metzenbaum (D., Ohio) blocked efforts in Congress to retain a retirement exemption for public-safety workers, Frederick Nesbitt, who heads the 200,000-member International Association of Fire Fighters, warned that elderly fire and rescue workers would more often be incapacitated at critical moments: extending age-bias law into this area, he said, would "result in the injury or death of innocent people."

The crusade against strength tests is immensely popular in the law schools, where it's seen as a shining example of what feminist law can do. And yet despite two decades of activism, the actual number of women firefighters remains low, an estimated 2 per cent nationally. Many wash out of training when they learn the physical demands of the job, or go on disability later. But what may be most corrosive about the courts' hostility to strength tests is that it keeps services from upholding standards among *men*: if they can drag the 40-pound dummy, they're in. Call it a pro-child policy, since only tots are guaranteed a capable rescuer.

Now the ADA is making things much worse. Nesbitt suggested in congressional testimony that the combination of the ADA and new bans on test "norming" is likely to make designing meaningful fitness tests "extraordinarily difficult and perhaps impossible." He added, "To date, EEOC has been unable to identify valid tests that will meet these criteria."

Not all women are happy about the assumptions made by the courts and the lawyers who presume to speak for women. "You have to ask yourself, if it was your child or your mother, who do you want to go and get her down the ladder?" asked Lauren Howard, for years the only woman on the Chicago fire department. "Do you want somebody big, incredibly strong, extremely fast, or someone who is average?"

Let's hope the life of someone we love never depends on the answer to that question. □

Who's the Deadbeat?

U.S. efforts to reform the UN have been half-hearted—or less.

MICHAEL MICHALSKI

UNITED Nations reform is back in the news. Shortly after his appointment as secretary general, Kofi Annan, a career UN bureaucrat from Ghana, traveled to Washington to assure congressional leaders that he shared their concerns and was committed to reducing waste and inefficiency in the world body. President Clinton and Secretary of State Albright welcomed the new secretary general's determination to carry out reform. But why, after nearly two decades of U.S. effort, is UN reform still an issue?

The UN's resistance to change is

Mr. Michalski served on the U.S. delegation to the United Nations in New York as an advisor on financial, management, and reform issues from 1980 to 1994.

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often blamed on the UN bureaucracy itself, or on the Third World countries that dominate the General Assembly. In fact, much of the fault lies closer to home.

During the Reagan Administration, Congress began taking a closer look at UN operations and did not like what it found. As Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick repeatedly pointed out, UN operations were full of waste, fraud, and abuse. With budgetary constraints at home, few could defend excess at the UN. In 1985 Congress approved with bipartisan support the landmark Kassebaum Amendment, which required the UN to adopt major institutional, administrative, and financial reforms, or risk loss of contributions from the United States, which provides 25 per cent of the UN's annual budget.

ADOPTION of this legislation caused a furor in the UN Secretariat and among UN member states. The U.S. was condemned for financial blackmail. By the late 1980s many UN member states openly attacked the U.S. for its continued withholding. The U.S. was accused of bad faith and acting as an "international outlaw." Some of the most stinging attacks came from Western Europe and Canada. U.S. officials in Washington and New York tended to collapse in the face of such criticism. It would not be long before U.S. officials, some at the highest levels, would refer to their own country as a "deadbeat nation."

The contradiction in U.S. policy under the Bush and later the Clinton Administration—promoting budget reductions and reform while insisting on increased spending in support of priority programs—was readily apparent to UN bureaucrats and foreign delegates alike. Reaction ranged from sarcastic commentary in UN meetings to outright blackmail in which allocation of resources in support of U.S. priorities was made dependent on continued funding of worthless activities favored by foreign delegates or the UN bureaucracy.

Support for the vast expansion of the UN's peacekeeping role was the best example of the contradictory nature of U.S. policy. Over a period of ten years, the Security Council considered nearly twenty new peacekeeping operations and missions. Although many did not involve important strategic interests, and although in sum they would eventually increase U.S. peacekeeping contributions more than tenfold, the U.S. never exercised its veto. With a legal obligation to fund 25 per cent of costs, the U.S. was committed to spending several billion dollars over the next decade. Whenever anyone warned that existing UN administrative and financial structures were grossly inadequate to the tasks at hand, these warnings were dismissed as petty concerns of "bean counters."

But conscious U.S. policy decisions were only part of what undercut reform efforts. U.S. diplomats and bureaucrats have been busily following their own agendas, regardless of official policy.

U.S. diplomats in New York, Geneva, Vienna, Rome, Nairobi, and other UN locations, backed by State Department officials in Washington, have fought tirelessly to adopt new, or expand existing, UN economic, social, and development programs which could wind up costing the U.S. Treasury even more than peacekeeping. Promotion of these poorly planned and organized initiatives has often taken place at lavish world conferences, in cities such as Peking, Rio de Janeiro, Rome, Copenhagen, Paris, and Cairo, each costing millions of dollars. The U.S. enthusiastically supported all of them.

How did the U.S. allow itself to become entrapped in such wasteful boondoggles? State Department officials, particularly political appointees serving in high-level ambassadorial positions, are by their background and training eager to cultivate professional and personal relations with delegates from other countries. Within the UN, decisions to support costly new initiatives are often influenced by a desire to maintain or improve relations with the countries sponsoring the program.

UN activities which were clearly boondoggles could thus count on having avid supporters within the U.S. Government. For example, in 1991 the U.S. delegation proposed elimination of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR), established in 1955 as part of President Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" initiative. Only a handful of U.S. officials knew this organization still existed; even fewer knew what it did or could come up with any justification for it based on U.S. interests. Although the Austrian delegation blocked its elimination (UNSCEAR is situated in Vienna), the General Assembly requested a study to identify possible savings in the program.

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Several months after this decision, the U.S. Mission in New York received an angry telegram from the State Department demanding to know why the U.S. delegation had supported such a dangerous move. Those responsible for UNSCEAR at the State Department obviously had not read the U.S. Mission's telegram recommending its termination. State reacted only when the UN official (a U.S. national) who ran UNSCEAR's office contacted Washington, perhaps out of fear that his job might be eliminated. Nothing resulted from the study, and the angry response by State served as a warning to would-be budget-cutters and reformers.

U.S. diplomats fight tirelessly to adopt new, or expand existing, UN economic, social, and development programs.

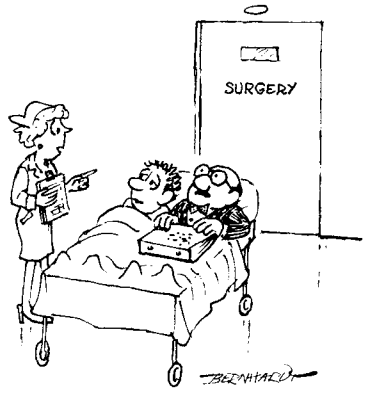
THE most serious disaster for reform was suffered in the effort to establish a UN Office of Inspector General (OIG), as mandated by the United States Congress. The U.S. Mission's initial blueprint, based on the statutes establishing U.S. Inspector General Offices, was thoroughly undermined by senior officials of the Clinton Administration. The UN Secretariat, which received a leaked copy of the Mission's paper, lobbied Washington, protesting that this plan violated the secretary general's authority and imposed unacceptable constraints on the UN's way of doing business. Even the U.S. General Accounting Office, which had proposed a UN OIG many years before, collaborated with foreign officials in the effort to sink the U.S. Mission's plan.

An OIG was anathema not only to the Secretariat, but to the vast majority of UN members as well. In 1993, shortly after President Clinton endorsed the OIG concept in his speech before the General Assembly, Canada circulated a memorandum among major UN contributors which stated that the OIG "conjured up Gestapo-like images," a charge which senior U.S. Mission officials refused to condemn publicly.

The U.S. proposal submitted to the General Assembly one year later reflected the major changes demanded by the Secretariat and member states. The U.S. draft would be weakened further during formal negotiations in the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary). The lead U.S. representative, Ambassador Victor Marrero, had never attended a Fifth Committee session before and had no expertise in the subject. He proved all too willing to concede major provisions to other delegations, especially those from Western Europe, the strongest opponents of the OIG concept.

The body that finally emerged from these negotiations, the Office of Internal Oversight Services, has, after more than two years of operation, proved to be no more effective than the oversight mechanisms it replaced. The Office lacks independence from the secretary general and it lacks adequate resources, particularly experienced investigators and auditors. Its record of accomplishment is extremely poor. For example, millions of dollars in equipment and cash were stolen in Bosnia, Cambodia, Mozambique, and Somalia, and none of this has been recovered. At her confirmation hearing, Secretary of State–designate Madeleine Albright said that rather than a "junk-yard dog" the OIOS was no more than a "puppy." She was absolutely right. However, as a result of her mishandling of the issue while she was ambassador to the UN, the OIOS is unlikely ever to develop much in the way of teeth.

Ambassador Albright may have singlehandedly deposed Secretary General Boutros-Ghali, cultivating an image of toughness, but the result of her effort may mean even less progress toward reform. The new secretary general, considered by insiders a "lightweight" on substance, gave no indication in his previous positions (in the Department of Administration and Management, and as head of the Department for Peacekeeping Operations) that he possesses the ability or the inclination to pursue real reform. The Clinton Administration's much-touted Presidential Decision Directive 25, aimed at a comprehensive reform of UN peacekeeping, got little support from Annan. In time, Kofi Annan will prove to be an albatross around Madeleine Albright's neck.



"Sorry, your attorney is not allowed in the operating room with you."

Mrs. Albright's record of success in other areas of UN reform was equally unimpressive. U.S. delegation members responsible for implementing what remained of our UN reform policy were subjected to continual harassment during her tenure. Specific initiatives designed to cut costs or curb the bureaucracy were dismissed as UN-bashing or as the failed ideas of previous (Republican) administrations. U.S. delegates to the Fifth Committee were instructed to remain silent when mismanagement and waste were evident, particularly where programs on which the United States placed a high priority were involved. For example, U.S. delegates were prohibited from drawing attention to the obvious duplication and waste in the UN's Center for Human Rights and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Under-Secretary General for Administration and Management Joseph Connor, an American national, demanded and often received U.S. support for Secretariat proposals that did not meet congressional expectations for reform. For all the rhetoric of the past four years, U.S. assessments remain unchanged; outdated, ineffective programs and bureaucracies continue to receive funding; management of peacekeeping operations is in disarray; and, for the first time in UN history, there is no U.S. expert on the most important and influential UN budgetary oversight body, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

As U.S. arrears increased, Ambassador Albright and her deputies tolerated an excessive degree of name-calling and U.S.-bashing by the Secretariat and member states. The fact that as much as $6.6 billion in goods and services were contributed by the Defense Department to UN peacekeeping operations was swept under the rug by the State Department and Mrs. Albright's U.S. Mission. The only statements on the subject of U.S. contributions concerned the damage to the United States' credibility

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that our debts were causing, together with pleas to Congress that it drop demands for further reform and pay up.

Therefore, it is no surprise that the Clinton Administration's recent request for $1 billion to pay U.S. arrears does not depend on any further UN reform. While Boutros-Ghali expressed little interest in the issue during his last years in office, replacing him did not significantly alter the dynamics of the General Assembly, which remains extremely hostile to any reform proposal.

Thus, Mrs. Albright's sacking of Boutros-Ghali was no more than a cynical ploy to assure her appointment as secretary of state. It was not coincidental that she was nominated to the post the day after Boutros-Ghali suspended his re-election campaign. Given these circumstances, it is unconscionable for the Administration to treat Mrs. Albright's billion-dollar promise as anything other than a personal debt incurred to further her own career interests.

After more than a decade of trying to have it both ways, the UN is overextended, underfunded, and incapable of doing all that the U.S. and the other 184 members expect. Given the Clinton Administration's commitment to a balanced budget, and the sacrifices that demands of Americans, the U.S. must no longer follow policies which add to the cost of membership while paying no more than lip service to UN reform. Congress, which has provided the only real leadership on UN reform over the past ten years, must not waver. It should enforce the relevant provisions of P.L. 103-236 and consider new legislation, if necessary, until the task is completed. □

Lords of the Flies

The United States Government is forcing landowners to spend millions of dollars to protect an endangered bug.

IKE C. SUGG

WHEN President Nixon signed the Endangered Species Act in 1973, he inadvertently codified Aldo Leopold's stylish but stupid aphorism, "To keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering." Should we lament the extinction of smallpox, or expand the ESA to protect unique life forms such as various viruses for future generations? Before we "Save the fungus among us!" as Gary Larson once quipped, we might want to reconsider what we are already trying to save—and, more importantly, how we are going about it.

At present, the ESA protects 33 species of insect. While most Americans might not think twice about stepping on a bug, the federal penalty if the bug turns out to be a rare one can amount to $200,000 in fines and one year in jail. And the same goes for modifying the habitat of such a species—even if the critters in question do not actually live on the land in question. In short, the ESA authorizes the Federal Government to prohibit *anything* that might encroach on or disturb species that are classified as "threatened" or "endangered."

Consider the case of the Delhi sands flower-loving fly, featured in a recent *NBC Nightly News* report on "The Fleecing of America." This fly is a native of the Colton Dunes in California's San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. It is known to live on less than 200 acres, all but 10 of which are privately owned.

The fly spends most of its life underground, in a larval stage, and lives for only about a week above ground. During that short period of time, the males find mates and breed. After these encounters the females deposit their eggs beneath sandy soil. Then the adult flies die and the cycle begins anew.

NBC reported that the fly, listed as an "endangered" subspecies in 1993, has already cost the taxpayers of San Bernardino County some $4.5 million. The reason? Eight flies were seen buzzing around the building site for a new hospital. The subspecies was listed less than 24 hours before construction was scheduled to begin; as a result, the county had to move the hospital, set aside almost ten acres of valuable land for a fly preserve, and monitor the fly's fortunes for the Federal Government. The county had paid approximately $400,000 per acre for that land; the Federal Government reimbursed none of that cost.

As expensive as this was, it could have been worse. Initially, an official of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Linda Dawes, demanded that the county set aside the entire 68-acre hospital site for the fly. According to the sworn affidavit of a witness, Miss Dawes went so far as to demand that Interstate 10, an eight-lane freeway, be shut down—or traffic slowed to 15 mph—during August and September, when the flies emerge for their week-long sojourn above ground. She worried that one of these rare bugs might end up on the windshield of a speeding car.

In the end, construction of the hospital went forward, I-10 remained open, and Linda Dawes left her job at Fish & Wildlife. But that does not mean that all is well in San Bernardino County. The intersection of Valley Boulevard and Pepper Avenue near the hospital's main entrance is severely congested. Unless the approach to the hospital is improved, a recent study concluded, "virtual gridlock" will result when the hospital opens. Emergency access will be slow, costing precious time to those for whom a few minutes can make the difference between life and death.

The Fish & Wildlife Service, however, insists that the county's plan to reconfigure the intersection will "encroach" on a "migration corridor" for the fly, thus "harming" the fly and violating the ESA. No flies have ever been documented as using this migration corridor, but that doesn't matter. The Service has a theory.

According to Service biologists, the flies need to be able to travel, unimpeded, over natural vegetation, from the hospital preserve to suitable habitat about a quarter-mile away. Presumably, the flies will head west, following the 100-foot-wide corridor designed for

Mr. Sugg is Fellow in Wildlife and Land-Use Policy at the Competitive Enterprise Institute in Washington.

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them, then make a 90-degree turn to the north, where the flyway narrows to 30 feet, and follow that path for 700 feet. At the end of the flyway, the flies will make a 90-degree turn to the west and cross a four-lane street, on the other side of which their habitat awaits.

Assuming that the flies will understand and follow the flight path laid out for them, one wonders how they will make it across the busy street. Common sense suggests that oncoming traffic would pose a greater threat than an overly narrow flyway. The county proposed to retain an 18-foot-wide migration corridor for the fly, but the Service said that the proposal was "not biologically justified" and threatened to sue the county if it went forward without "mitigating" for the flyway. In other words, the county will have to buy the Delhi sands flower-loving fly yet another preserve.

'The extinction of the Delhi sands flower-loving fly in the immediate future is a likely event,' according to the Interior Department's own report.

IT gets worse. These imperiled insects live alongside imperiled people, in an area of historically high unemployment and economic distress. To attract industry and create jobs, the 10,000-acre Agua Mansa Enterprise Zone was established in 1986, one of California's first enterprise zones. It offers specific tax advantages to businesses that locate within the zone. But there is a fly in the ointment.

For CanFibre, Inc., a Canadian manufacturer of recycled fiberboard, the Delhi sands flower-loving fly has added $450,000 to the cost of building a plant in the Agua Mansa. The Fish & Wildlife Service claimed that CanFibre's entire 300-acre property was occupied by the fly, and that the company would have to give up 65 acres to "mitigate." Tom Olsen, a biologist who consulted on the project, says the government's demands rest on "rhetorical horse manure."

"Less then 10 acres of suitable habitat exists on the property," says Olsen. Indeed, his biologists "had [only] two sightings of males flying over the property; there was no evidence of use by females, and the two males we identified could have been the same fly." As with the hospital, the feds backed off on halting the project, but they collected a cool $450,000 in cash.

Such extortion—wherein landowners fork over money, land, or both in exchange for permission to use their own land—is commonplace under the ESA. Indeed, that's what "habitat conservation plans" are all about. The cost of obtaining such permission has deterred at least one firm, Trism, Inc., from locating in the zone. "What they want is a fly park," said a Trism representative.

Since then, the Fish & Wildlife Service has come up with a new idea: it has announced that it wants to set aside 200 to 300 acres in the enterprise zone for yet *another* fly preserve (that makes three, for those who are keeping count). The Service claims this preserve will actually make things easier for the area's beleaguered landowners. Rather than forcing individual property owners and developers to run the regulatory gauntlet for development permits one at a time—an expensive and time-consuming process—the Service wants to create one grand extortion scheme through which landowners pay collectively.

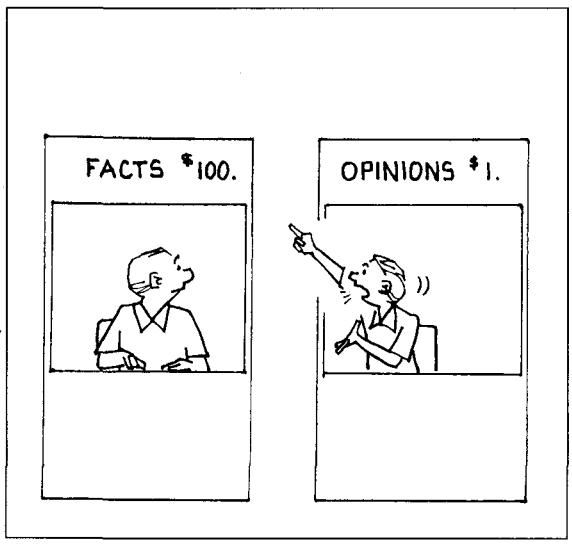
Such region-wide habitat conservation plans are supposed to be good for everyone. The fly gets a big preserve, and the landowners get "regulatory certainty." Since the fly preserve will be clearly defined, landowners will know up front whether the government is going to take their land. Those who own land nearby will pay a "development mitigation fee" to help compensate their neighbors whose land is to be included in the preserve. In other words, those who have flies on their land will be dispossessed, while those who do not have flies on their land will be robbed. Despite the admonition in the Fifth Amendment: "nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation," the Federal Government is here proposing not to distribute this cost across the whole public through taxation, but rather to impose it on a handful of people who happen to own neighboring property.

Local planners say the preserve land is worth approximately $35,000 per acre. That means a 300-acre fly preserve will cost $10.5 million—to be paid by those who develop land that is completely devoid of endangered flies. Because the ESA requires such "mitigation" to be paid only when "actual death or injury" occurs to protected wildlife, and because those who will be paying the mitigation do not have such wildlife on their land, the government's extortion scheme is patently contrary not only to the Constitution but also to the Act it is supposedly enforcing.

Many landowners will capitulate anyway. For those with liens on their property and notes to pay, fighting the feds is a losing proposition. In their view, it is a choice of being allowed to develop some land or none at all. Environmentalists claim such plans are totally voluntary, but in reality they present a Hobson's choice.

Even if developers buy into the scheme, it is likely to take them years to come up with the millions necessary to pay for the preserve. And even if the dispossessed landowners eventually get paid $35,000 an acre for their land, that may be far less than what it is really worth. San Bernardino County paid between $150,000 and $400,000 per acre for the nearby hospital site. As luck would have it, the most expensive land was where the eight flies were found. Now the flies are the de facto owners of prime real estate, taken on their behalf by the Federal Government.

While some might argue that the ends justify the means, in this case it appears that the ESA is causing all this trouble for nothing. "The extinction of the Delhi sands flower-



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loving fly in the immediate future is a likely event," according to the Interior Department's Draft Recovery Plan for the fly. The authors of the 1996 Recovery Plan predicted that the fly would go extinct even with the protection of the ESA's land-use regulations.

So why all the regulations? The answer is clear: Controlling development, rather than saving endangered species, has become the point of the ESA. Indeed, if environmentalists were honest they would admit that the ESA is encouraging habitat destruction, not conservation.

Endangered species are the last things landowners want on their property, and many are taking affirmative actions to ensure that their land is devoid of such species. This is the ESA's dirty little secret. The only way to correct such perverse incentives is by explicitly removing the Federal Government's claimed authority to take private property without paying for it. Until Congress does this, the United States' government-run protection racket will continue to wreak havoc on the lives of its hapless victims, both human and non-human. □

Personally Opposed

When politicians profess personal opposition to abortion, the appropriate answer is a question.

MICHAEL NOVAK

HAVE you ever nursed the fantasy that you would have the chance to ask certain politicians *one* question face to face?

Well, I have. To all those politicians who begin talking about abortion by saying, "Personally, I'm opposed to abortion but—" I would like to put one question: Can you tell me just *why* you are opposed to abortion? Can you give me just one good argument?

Tucker Carlson lived out my fantasy in an article in *The Weekly Standard* (June 24, 1996). Just as I suspected, the "personally opposed" crowd had nothing defensible to say.

So the public is still left in the lurch.

On no public issue except "choice" is there such a deafening public silence on one side. We constantly hear the arguments for choice. They're not so hard to understand. (I don't agree with them, but I understand them.) The argument I've never heard is why "choice" is a weak argument, and why the pro-life principle is a strong point of democracy.

The reason why "choice" is not a persuasive argument is that in moral matters the "right to choose" explains nothing. Everyone has to choose; choice is unavoidable. But that doesn't make particular choices justifiable. A shoplifter can't say, "I was exercising my right to choose," and neither can the smoker in a no-smoking zone. The *public* has a right to set rules that deprive the individual of some choices. Stronger reasons than "choice" are needed.

Of course, there is always a legitimate argument about *where* the public should make rules, and where it should not. Some argue that the matter of the beginning of life is at once so intimate and so disputed that the decision should be left to individuals. But there are two serious problems with that argument.

1. Any principle accepted for the beginning of life will logically be applied by the Courts to the end of life. If private citizens can terminate the life of one human being at the beginning, some will claim the same right to terminate the life of another at the end. Some lower courts have already affirmed this right. The practice of abortion will inure minds and hearts to the practice of mercy killing. The delivery of death by private persons at the beginning of life will lead to the delivery of death by private persons at the end.

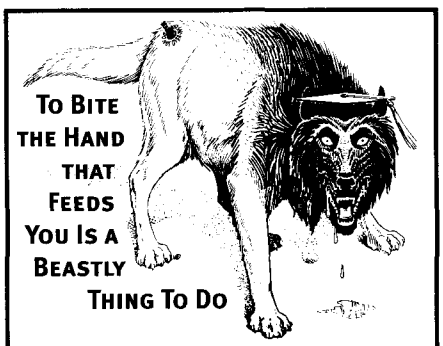
As the consent of the aborted is not even considered at the beginning, so requirements for obtaining consent at the end will be allowed to wobble and grow faint. There will always be passionately argued reasons for killing (relief from intolerable pain; the crushing costs of care).

A shoplifter can't say, 'I was exercising my right to choose,' and neither can the smoker in a non-smoking zone.

In short, the boundaries of life and death *must* be set by public decision. Each of us, at our beginning and at our end, is vulnerable to the choice of others. We need public protection against those others.

This, indeed, was John Locke's argument for the social contract. In the state of nature, humans act like wolves toward one another. They enter civil society through a social contract that takes all acts of violence out of private hands, and entrusts violence exclusively to public authorities, acting through due pro-

Mr. Novak is the author most recently of Business as a Calling *(Free Press).*



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cess. This provides a zone of safety for everyone.

Both in abortion and in euthanasia, private citizens take violence into their own hands and thus violate this social contract. They shrink the zone of civic safety. They weaken civic trust. They set a precedent for other acts of violence.

2. The second problem with asserting a right to choose is that abortion involves treating the other as an object, a thing. We cannot assert that status for ourselves. No one can say, "I'm just an object. Destroy me if you wish." We cannot give away our own human dignity, let alone that of another. Such words could be said, but they would be legally and morally empty.

Those in favor of "choice" (that is, in favor of a regime that puts abortion violence in private hands), usually argue that what is aborted is "not a human person." It is only a "part of the woman's body," they say, or it is "not a bearer of rights." (But some people who argue thus believe that animals have rights.) I don't see how they persuade themselves of such views.

I have heard many pregnant women speak of the "baby" in their womb, even at two or three months. I have never heard a mother say "my fetus."

Spontaneous language aside, what is aborted in the womb is never a cocker spaniel, or a tapeworm, or a body part like an appendix. It is human and only human.

Moreover, from its earliest moments, it has its own individual genetic code, different from that of the mother. It is an individual.

Third, it is always sexed. Its sex is sometimes different from that of the mother but, more often than not, it is a baby girl. It is human, and an individual. This baby girl is also—and will be for some years—quite helpless, and utterly dependent for her survival on her mother and father. (It may take the mother and father more than twenty years to push this child out of the nest.)

These are the reasons why I oppose abortion. I would love to hear the reasons others do. And how those who disagree with me justify to themselves what they wish to impose upon the public.

We need to understand each other better because a compromise, a deal, is not easy to reach. No one can half-abort.

This issue is like the issue of slavery a century ago. All of us have to reach a public decision together. Regarding slavery, personal choice is not a tenable position; our nation could not continue half slave and half free.

One way or the other, that's how certain matters have to end up. Either we will have a civil society that does not permit individual persons to practice private violence, whether in abortion or euthanasia or other areas; or we will have a society—considerably less civil—that does. The difference is huge.

Such a decision is best arrived at democratically and by way of public argument. It must not be imposed by elites, or by institutions subservient to elites, or in the obscurity and mists, penumbras and prejudices of elites.

Please, let us hear the public arguments. In public. On both sides.

That's my fantasy. □

Just a thought . . .

MARTY YORK

WASHINGTON, APRIL 7, (AP)—Investigators searching the Rancho Santa Fe mansion in which 39 cult followers died were startled to find the name of a former top White House official in the computer files of Heaven's Gate founder Marshall Herff Applewhite.

Police say e-mails from former White House deputy chief of staff Harold Ickes, along with faxes discovered in a suitcase at the foot of Applewhite's bed, appear to be related to Democratic National Committee fundraising efforts.

According to sources who have read the documents, one fax says that in return for a $100,000 contribution, Applewhite would be allowed to bring a group of interplanetary businessmen traveling aboard the starship *Arcturan Voyager* to a White House coffee hosted by President Clinton.

Included among Applewhite's guests were several Arcturan entrepreneurs interested in establishing commercial ties with Earth.

Sources at the National Security Council say NSC experts warned Administration staffers that Applewhite was a "kook" and should be avoided. A White House spokesman denies receiving any such warning.

A delegation made up of Applewhite and six aliens did attend a coffee with the President and also was present for one of his Saturday-morning radio addresses, according to Administration sources.

A photo of the President with the six aliens is said to be among Applewhite's papers. (There have been reports that the number of visitors was as high as nine, since the group included a three-part "colony-creature" reportedly named "Ron El-345.") The photo could prove an embarrassment to the White House, which had previously stated that the President was unaware of any intergalactic travelers attending White House functions.

"If space aliens were invited to the White House without my knowledge, that was clearly improper," the President said at his recent news conference. "I didn't know anything about this visit until I read about it in the press."

Asked how several bottle-green aliens —some with multiple appendages composed of a jelly-like substance—could blend undetected with other donors at the coffee, the President became visibly angry.

"I find it disturbing that some members of the press would use skin color or non-standard bodies as criteria for having one's voice heard by the President of the United States," Mr. Clinton said. "This Administration listens respectfully to every American, and it troubles me that certain extreme elements would suggest some people shouldn't be welcome in the White House just because they communicate by rubbing their mandibles together."

White House spokesman Lanny Davis said the Justice Department has begun an investigation, along with the Director of Security at NASA. □

Mrs. York writes articles from the planet Earth.

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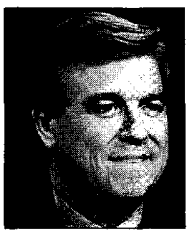
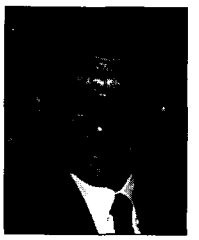
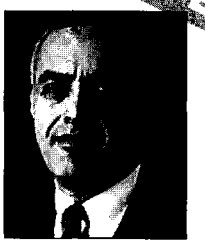

Haley Barbour

William F. Buckley Jr.


Milton Friedman

Robert Bork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BY ED SKIMO

National Review Alaska Cruise Correspondent

(New York: April 15): "Haley" Smokes! Add yet another star to the expanding constellation of conservative luminaries who will attend the ***National Review 1997 Alaska Cruise*** this August 10-17.

None other than Haley Barbour, former chairman of the Republican National Committee and one of the prime architects of the GOP's smashing 1994 election triumphs, will join Bill Buckley, Milton Friedman, Robert Bork, Robert Novak, Dan Lungren, Pat Sajak, Gary Bauer, and *National Review*'s heralded "A Team"—John O'Sullivan, Kate O'Beirne, Rick Brookhiser, Ed Capano, and Dusty Rhodes—for a week of conservative revelry along the glorious waterways of "The Land of the Midnight Sun."

Barbour—a sensation on *NR*'s fabulous "Post-Election" cruise last year—will no doubt once again "wow" passengers with his pull-no-punches commentary on the state of the GOP and the current tribulations facing Newt Gingrich, Trent Lott, & Company.

Opportunities to attend this once-in-a-lifetime cruise are "narrowing fast," reports an informed source inside *NR*'s Office of Cruise Affairs: "well over 200 cabins"—including dozens of nearly-sold-out "verandah" staterooms—"have been reserved by *NR* subscribers, their friends, and family members." Calls continue to pour in every day to the *NR* Cruise Information Hotline, while officials at The Cruise Authority confirm that "each day brings *another* handful of reservations," and warned that "at this rate, *National Review*'s allotment of reserved staterooms will be sold out in a matter of weeks."

In store for those lucky conservatives who attend the ***National Review 1997 Alaska Cruise*** are an array of seminars—featuring policy and political discussion starring our special guests and *NR* editors)—plus exclusive cocktail receptions and late-eveing "smokers" featuring world-class H. Upmann cigars and "top shelf" cognac. All of which will be enjoyed aboard Holland America's award-winning MS *Ryndam* (voted 1995 "Ship of the Year by the authoratative *Ocean and Cruise News*), renowned throughout the cruise industry for its pampering service, superior cuisine, luxurious staterooms, exciting shore excursions, and wonderful night life.

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Prices for the ***National Review 1997 Alaska Cruise*** start at only $2,194 per person (which covers accommodations, meals, taxes, port fees, transfers, complimentary 24-hour room service, gratuities, and admission to and participation in all *NR* seminars and social events), and couples can save up to $900 off "catalogue" rates.

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THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

April 12, 1997

Dear Rusty,

Well, at least now I know what it's like to get bad press. It wasn't really getting to me until last week, when I was scheduled to brief Bill on my recent China trip. I got to the Oval Office a little early, and caught Newt Gingrich in there, briefing Bill on his trip to China. They were laughing merrily.

"What's so funny?" I asked as I entered the room.

"Hello, Mr. Vice President," Newt said, rising. "The President and I were just sharing a laugh about our respective political problems. You know, as de Tocqueville put it—"

"Hi, Al," Bill said. "Newt and I were just going over some China policy questions. Then we got to talking about how Newt is going to pay his fine—"

"Um, excuse me Mr. President," Gingrich interjected. "I think you mean my reimbursement."

"Yeah," Bill said, "whatever. And then Newt said that his wife wouldn't let him pay it out of their savings, and then I said that it sounds like his wife and my wife would get along."

"And then I said," Newt interjected, again, "that it was Ptolemy who first postulated—"

I shifted uncomfortably. "Maybe I should come back later."

So I ducked out of the Oval Office and dashed back to my office, trying to avoid the crowd of reporters on the steps. I was out of luck. They descended.

"What do you think of the First Lady's statement about Whitewater conspiracy theorists?" they wanted to know.

"What was her statement?" I asked.

"She referred to the spaceship that is supposedly traveling behind the Hale–Bopp comet."

"Oh," I said, "then I agree with her completely."

But of course the press got it all wrong. I wasn't supporting the First Lady on Whitewater. I was supporting her on belief in extraterrestrial life. Leave it to the media to miss the forest for the trees.

Then I started to wonder if maybe the press had decided to rough me up in order to show me adversity, to test me.

I was a journalist in Vietnam (others made a different choice; I'm not judging; incidentally, how long was Dick Gephardt's tour of duty?) so I have long recognized my status as . . . as . . . as a press favorite.

Of course, I've enjoyed the glowing profiles in Time and Newsweek and Vanity Fair and The New Yorker. And I've appreciated the New York Times and the Washington Post every few months or so reminding voters that I've got a sharp sense of humor and I'm very hip. And how can I thank ABC, CBS, NBC, and CNN for all they've done? And if I start talking about Marty Peretz and The New Republic, well, I'm liable to start blubbering.

So I know that when these friends, these very very good friends, pick on me, it's for a reason. And leave it to Dad to explain it to me. I called him up and said, "Dad, I think my friends in the media have turned against me."

"Just a sec, my boy," he said, and I heard the familiar sound of ice and glass and bourbon being set down with a thud on the table. "Now," he said.

"I'm getting a lot of bad press, Dad."

"Well what do you expect, boy? You take dirty money, you lie about it, you fly to China, you accomplish nothing, and then you expect it all to blow over?"

"You're not being very supportive, Dad."

"Damn right I'm not. Who's that fat character? The one with the terrible hair?"

"Bill Clinton?"

"No, no, no. I know him. The other one."

"Newt Gingrich?"

"Yes! Him! Notice how he's getting good press these days? Well, by 'good' I mean 'good for him.'"

"Yes," I replied glumly. "I've noticed."

"Well then, you'll see my point. Who do the guys in the press like more, you or Gingrich?"

"Me, I guess."

"So why are they giving Gingrich such good notices?"

"To help him . . . to help him . . ." Suddenly, it dawned on me. "To help him keep Gephardt in his place! And that helps me! Oh, Dad. They like me! They really, really like me!"

"See, my boy. It was all a lot of nothin'."

Then I had second thoughts. "But Dad, that only helps if I'm running against Gephardt. What if I end up running against Bill Bradley?"

I heard ice and glass and bourbon being picked up, then a long sipping noise.

"In that case, my boy, have you ever considered becoming governor of Tennessee?"

Of course, Rusty, up until today I had never really thought about it.

Your pal, Al

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BOOKS, ARTS & MANNERS

E Pluribus Plures

JOHN FONTE

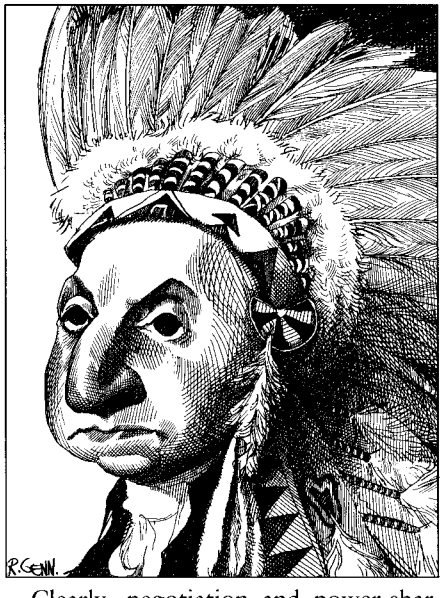
HARVARD professor Nathan Glazer is one of America's most prominent social scientists; his writings on race, ethnicity, immigration, education, and social policy have influenced generations of scholars. His new book, which examines the debate over multiculturalism in pre-collegiate education, is sure to disappoint many old admirers and allies. Professor Glazer concludes with great reluctance that "multiculturalism has won" and that it is best to resign ourselves to this "reality."

Multiculturalism in education is defined as an emphasis on race, ethnicity, and gender in the teaching of history, social studies, and literature, including a new focus on women, African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, Asian-Americans, Native Americans, and non-Western peoples, combined with a critical view of America's legacy at home and abroad. Multiculturalism, Professor Glazer asserts, arises from "the fundamental refusal of other Americans to accept blacks, despite their eagerness, as suitable candidates for assimilation." While other groups are involved, he insists that the main impetus comes from blacks, who are the "storm troops of multiculturalism."

We Are All Multiculturalists Now, by Nathan Glazer (Harvard, 179 pp., $19.95)

Moreover, he writes that although the multicultural approach often exaggerates and is not his personal preference, it is, nevertheless, essentially benign. In perhaps the single most important assertion of the book, Glazer declares that "the basic demand of the multiculturalists is for inclusion, not separation, and inclusion under the same rules—stretching back to the Constitution—that have permitted the steady broadening of what we understand as equality."

Well, not exactly. One leading proponent of multicultural education, the author of the National Council for the Social Studies' statement on the subject, writes as follows: "To create an authentic democratic *unum* with moral authority and perceived legitimacy, the *pluribus* (diverse peoples) must negotiate and share power."



Roman Genn

Clearly, negotiation and power-sharing among diverse "peoples" are not the "same rules—stretching back to the Constitution." Nor is this an isolated example. The New York State curriculum ("One Nation, Many Peoples"), the National History Standards, and other multicultural documents continually refer to the American "peoples." Multiculturalism is not about "inclusion" under the "same rules"; it is about *changing* the rules: transforming the American polity from a system based on individual citizenship to one based on group rights and group consciousness.

Those of us who have participated in myriad curriculum-development and social-studies conferences during the past decade have heard the multiculturalist message repeatedly. This message has come not primarily from blacks, but from advocacy-oriented whites in their forties and fifties—in short, from an adversarial intelligentsia of the 1960s generation. These are the people who form vanguard opinion in the academy. They —not black educators—are the "storm troops of multiculturalism." At the same time, it is indisputable that the increasing percentage of different groups of minority children, including immigrant children, in our schools provides ammunition to justify the "need" for multiculturalism.

In the politics of education, the essentials of the activists' agenda are legitimized and ratified by what could be called an accommodationist intelligentsia. An example of how multiculturalism advances can be deduced from Glazer's descriptions of curriculum fights over the New York social-studies framework and the National History Standards. The original versions of these two documents evoked strong opposition. So, in both cases, a second group of academics was formed to review the work of the original panel and recommend a more "balanced" approach. Glazer himself served on the second New York panel, and he writes that in both situations, the review panels recommended eliminating the "smoking guns," but forged compromises that still produced multicultural documents. In effect, an accommodationist intelligentsia filtered, then ratified and codified, the basic multicultural frameworks originally presented in cruder forms. The net result was two steps forward, one step back for multiculturalism.

Unfortunately, Glazer is amiss in describing the details of the National History Standards controversy. He charac-

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terizes the process of creating the standards as "displaying remarkable inclusiveness," but he does not tell us that internal critics of the standards who objected to their anti-Western bias (including Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Gilbert Sewall) were ignored. Nor does he tell us that the organization that sponsored the review, the Council for Basic Education, rescinded its invitation to critic John Patrick Diggins to serve on the U.S. history review panel because Gary Nash, the principal author of the original standards, objected. (So much for "impartial" review.) Further, Glazer mistakenly describes the Council for Basic Education as "conservative." The CBE was formerly traditionalist but is now indistinguishable from the rest of the education establishment.

Negotiation and power-sharing among diverse 'peoples' are not the 'same rules—stretching back to the Constitution.'

Other aspects of the book are troubling too. Glazer implies that he would not object to teaching elementary-school students that the Iroquois influenced the formation of the U.S. Constitution, although there is no evidence for this bogus claim foisted upon the New York curriculum by Indian activists. He sees no "smoking gun" in the revised New York framework he helped draft, although its very title, "One Nation, Many Peoples," should have set off an alarm. Glazer objects to Jorge Klor de Alva's insistence that Latino subgroup loyalty should "trump American loyalty"—by replying that subgroup loyalty should be "on the same level as a larger American loyalty," instead of clearly stating that loyalty to America should trump all subgroup loyalties.

A chapter on black poverty is particularly disappointing. Glazer is skeptical of more federal programs, but his language evokes social-science liberalism circa 1965 ("residential segregation, lack of jobs, poor schools"). There is no serious discussion of morality, fatherhood, or religion. Just when it looks as if he is ready to plunge into the current civil-society debate with references to Glenn Loury, neighborhoods, and families, he stops short and is silent on what Gertrude Himmelfarb calls the need to "remoralize" society.

Professor Glazer is overly generous in attributing benign motives to multiculturalists: "They seek inclusion and equality in a common society." But many of them seek power, revenge, ego fulfillment, and career advancement. After all, the heroes of the adversarial intelligentsia are not the authors of the *Federalist Papers*, but Nietzsche and Gramsci; and accommodationist intellectuals are well aware of the rewards available to those who burn incense before the idols of race, ethnicity, and gender.

Glazer concludes by stating that America today is two nations, one white and one black—hence the "inevitability" of multiculturalism. But if we are two nations we are closer to Norman Podhoretz's view that an adversarial "liberationist" nation has been waging nonstop cultural war on a "traditionalist" nation since the 1960s. In this sense, multiculturalism is a weapon wielded by an aggressive liberationist nation that seeks first to deconstruct and then to transform the traditionalist American nation and its liberal-democratic way of life. Our response to multicultural education should not be the resignation and accommodation suggested by Professor Glazer, but principled and forthright opposition in defense of our constitutional republic and its liberal-democratic virtues. □

Keynesian Capers

JOHN O. McGINNIS

A FLATTERING portrait is always pleasant, but the most malicious caricature can be a real treasure for the person depicted. In seizing on the habits and elements of appearance most vulnerable to ridicule, the cartoonist warns his subject of the aspects of his personality that most require shifts in presentation. In that sense, these two books make very useful reading for conservatives.

Everything for Sale: The Virtues and Limits of Markets, by Robert Kuttner (Knopf, 410 pp., $27.50)

One World, Ready or Not, by William Greider (Simon & Schuster, 528 pp., $27.50)

At the heart of Robert Kuttner's cartoon of conservatism is the steely-eyed rational economic actor, calculating perfectly for his advancement in all spheres of human activity. According to Kuttner's jeremiad, the laissez-faire model has systematically distorted social policy during the conservative revival of the last decades. Kuttner claims that in the economic market it leads to false ideas of perfect competition and that in other areas of human relations it overlooks and thereby devalues sentiments that do not rest on self-interest, such as family feeling and altruism. He contends that this model has done the worst damage in the area of politics, giving birth to a theory of "public choice" which suggests that individuals will exploit democratic processes to maximize their wealth and status rather than to advance the public good. Kuttner believes that this theory has undermined support for correcting market imperfections by spreading the lie that government failure is likely to have far worse consequences than market failure.

Kuttner's description of conservative thought is a relatively sophisticated version of the most common liberal attack. Conservatism, it is said, ushers in an era of greed that deprives society of the benefit of the noble drives that are locked within us all. While this charge is false, it succeeds as political advertising because it has this admixture of truth: conservatives do believe that any society must recognize that man often operates from self-interest.

Fortunately, with the demise of Communism and the self-evident failure of the Great Society, the battle against collective economic planning that ignores the role of individual interest and enterprise has largely been won. It is there-

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fore a propitious time for conservatives to disarm the kind of critique Kuttner offers by emphasizing ideas that show the full richness of the conservative vision of man.

Kuttner's ideas about how to translate a more complex model of man into a better society in fact show that liberalism is even more vulnerable to criticism in the civic than in the economic sphere. Liberalism has proved even worse at nurturing altruism than at harnessing self-interest. Incredibly, one of Kuttner's principal pieces of evidence of conservative disdain for charity is the Republican refusal to fully fund President Clinton's AmeriCorps program. AmeriCorps—which involves paying young people to be "volunteers"—represents the summit of the bureaucratization of charity, among whose effects is the crowding out of real charity. On the one hand, liberals have fettered charitable institutions that rest on natural sentiments, such as churches and synagogues (for instance, a large part of the modern Establishment Clause is dedicated to making it difficult for religious institutions to administer public assistance). On the other hand, liberals have set up vast bureaucracies where individuals are paid to do good. AmeriCorps makes the Orwellian nature of the enterprise clear by calling fledgling mandarins "volunteers."

In contrast, conservatives should make the case that many of their current reform proposals have as a central goal the revival of real charity. For instance, one of the worst aspects of contemporary public education has been the impediment it creates to releasing the altruism of the community. Individuals naturally wish to help guide and train the youth of their community, but this impulse is vitiated by public-school bureaucracies, which sever community ties, and frustrated by teachers' unions, which fear competition. By connecting parents to community schools of their choice, a program of vouchers would unleash charitable impulses and thus allow children to be educated in an environment that is richer in both resources and affections than the current bureaucratized public schools.

Kuttner's complaint that conservatives overemphasize the role of self-interest in politics likewise underscores the baleful effects of yet another twentieth-century liberal project: the dissolution of the checks and balances of limited government. Individuals can act for the public good under certain conditions. Unfortunately, the successive constitutional transformations of the Progressive Era, the New Deal, and the Great Society have eroded those conditions. The modern welfare state sustains a war of all against all because interest groups use it to redistribute resources to themselves. Such groups cannot be much restrained by altruism because altruism depends on the attachments of family, community, or at least some shared purpose, and interest groups are defined precisely by the purposes they do not share with the nation as a whole.

Kuttner's attempts to argue that self-interest will not infect the operations of a polity structured like ours are embarrassingly feeble. In defense of the possibility of altruism in the modern state, he observes that most people vote even though any individual voter has only an infinitesimal chance of changing the outcome of an election. But such modest acts of public-spiritedness do not show that people are willing to undertake the much larger self-sacrificing acts that are necessary to prevent special interests from controlling our polity. For instance, surveys indicate that individuals take the time to inform themselves only about issues that affect the interest groups of which they are members. Fellow-feeling operating at the vast distances of the federal regime is simply not strong enough to dissolve the prisoner's dilemma created by the centralized welfare state: although we

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...and many more.

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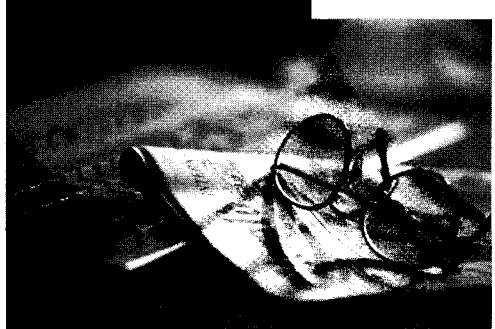

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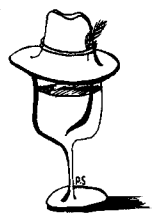
would be better off with a smaller government, no interest group will surrender the subsidies it receives from government unless it can be certain that other groups will too.

Conservatives, however, are proposing government reforms that would decrease the pervasiveness of self-interest in politics. Rules that require supermajorities at both the federal and state levels for new entitlement spending, for raising taxes, and for increasing debt would make it harder for special interests to work their will. As Michael Rappaport of the University of San Diego has noted, such rules would also tend to make citizens focus on what unites them rather than what divides them.

William Greider's solution to economic dislocation is to take every social theory that failed at the national level and globalize it.

IF *Everything for Sale* is a cartoon that nevertheless signals that conservatives should broaden their case beyond economic appeals, William Greider's *One World, Ready or Not,* is a warning, albeit often in comic-book form, of where the next economic battlefront will be. Greider's thesis is that global capitalism is reproducing what he regards as the terrible exploitations of the industrial era. His book takes a circuit around the world, offering anecdotes about everything from a sweatshop in Thailand to the loss of jobs in the auto and steel industries in the United States. He does not, however, compare such problems with the possible alternatives, like the dire rural poverty from which Third World laborers wish to escape.

In fact, neither Greider's analysis of the problems of international trade and global capital markets nor his solutions for controlling them are likely to persuade anyone who has been intellectually awake for the last three decades. Astonishingly, he claims to locate a crisis in global capitalism on the basis of the discredited Marxist theory of surplus production. His solution to economic dislocation is to take every social theory that has failed at the level of the nation-state and globalize it. Hence he argues that "global Keynesianism" can stimulate worldwide demand, taxing currency transactions will stabilize international monetary markets, and "global consciousness"—a kind of Greening of the World—which mixes feminism, environmentalism, and good old-fashioned working-class solidarity, will give rise to sensible economic planning on an international scale.



Despite the intellectual weaknesses of Greider's book, it is obvious that he has seized on the site of the next serious debate about the role of markets. International trade does cause temporary dislocations, and dislocated individuals are always prey for demagogues.

The prospect of such an economic debate should motivate conservatives to redouble their efforts toward developing a program of political and moral renewal. Ties formed by family and community are the first line of defense against the false family and community of centralized government. If families become more cohesive, parents should be better able to appreciate the contribution that international trade makes to the long-term economic well-being of their children, even at the expense of temporary dislocation to themselves. The revival of charity should also temper such dislocation, and the regeneration of local politics can sustain a civic pride that will help in periods of economic downturn. And the recovery of the values of prudence and thrift would provide an inoculation against delusions like global Keynesianism, which falsely suggest that coordinated spending by governments around the world can generate prosperity.

In a restless world the siren song of collectivism never entirely fades. When the song is muted, as in our era, it is imperative to rebuild the communities and traditional values that previous collectivist experiments have eroded. We will then be able to withstand the next crescendo for big government. □

Take Magical Realism—Please!

JONATHAN FOREMAN

THIS book, written by a Frenchman from Martinique, has been translated into 14 languages and has received extravagant praise all over Europe. The *New York Times* put it on the cover of its Sunday book review. The next day, a *Times* reviewer announced that *Texaco* "marks the advent on these shores of a remarkable writer. This is a book that signals discovery!"

So I was perhaps more surprised than I should have been to find *Texaco* ponderous, self-indulgent, and overwhelmingly mediocre. Of course whenever a reviewer goes on about "lush" descriptions, or "prose saturated in bemused gorgeousness," your critical alarm bells should go off. What he is really saying is: don't expect a strong plot; this is contemporary *literary* fiction—it's all about *description* and *atmosphere*. Mere storytelling, why that is for the common herd, for the readers of romance novels, mysteries, science fiction, and that lowest of all genres, the technothriller. (Forgive my dropping into French rhythms, but there is something very French about this sort of elitism.)

Texaco is not a terrible book. But getting through the first third was like watching paint dry. So why all the fuss?

Texaco, by Patrick Chamoiseau, translated by Rose-Myriam Rejouis and Val Vinokurov (Pantheon, 401 pp., $27)

Texaco is just second- or third-rate magical realism—one of many unfortunate imitations spawned by the success of Gabriel García Márquez's great *Hundred Years of Solitude*. Chamoiseau is not only no García Márquez, he's not even a Rushdie. What the *Times* calls "unexpected juxtapositions" are just failed metaphors, the sort of thing that might be attempted by a pretentious college sophomore.

The book's success in France is understandable for two reasons. First of all,

Mr. Foreman is a writer in New York.

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the French have failed to produce any good novelists since the war. The novel itself—despite triumphs in the last century—is now a form that has slipped into their cultural blindspot. As with rock 'n' roll, they really cannot tell the good from the bad, the lame from the cool, and so have almost no chance of producing high-quality work themselves. Secondly, the French have a rather patronizing predilection for the "exotic." And the fact that this author is black, fluent in Creole, and yet very, very French is more than enough to make him the toast of Paris.

Getting into the minds of "primitive" or "Third World" people seems to have an endless appeal to a certain Western taste. As if all that magic and superstition and suffering at the hands of incomprehensible historical forces makes the reader feel better about living in Milan or Chicago. Occasionally, when this style is attempted by a superbly talented novelist, you get something brilliant and enjoyable. One thinks of Mario Vargas Llosa's *The Storyteller*, or William Golding's *The Inheritors*. Updike pulls it off in *Brazil* and *The Coup*. But unfortunately it is more often a patronizing, touristic exercise than an enlightening one—a bit like the Hollywood movies which try to sell the notion that retarded or insane people have a lot to teach us about what life is really all about.

Although *Texaco* doesn't quite begin at the beginning, it is really a high-falutin family saga that starts in the days when Martinique was covered with sugar plantations and ends with a town council recognizing the property rights of shantytown settlers in the late 1980s. It is narrated by the daughter of a freed slave who was the founder of this Creole shantytown, built on the site of an oil-tank farm and therefore called Texaco. This woman's narrative—which includes some unlikely modernist reflections on the nature of literature, language, and "human truths"—is interspersed with notes written by an ethnologist called Oiseau de Cham, and the ruminations of an urban planner. "The Creole urban planner must from now on restart new trails, in order to arouse a countercity in the city." This man, referred to as "the Christ" by the locals, sees the beauty of the shantytown and prevents its demolition by the authorities.

Mr. Chamoiseau does succeed in conjuring an alternative universe of "mentoh" magicians and complex racial hierarchies: mulattoes, city-blackmen, maroons, "chabins" and "capresses," "guava-bekes" and "france-whites." History from below and ethnological research are all very well, but to do a García Márquez, you need strong characters and a story that never gets lost in the lushness. (Despite all the description, I finished this novel without any sense of what Martinique actually looks like.) Chamoiseau is fatally infected by whatever it is that makes French novelists even more self-indulgent than our own literary stars.

It is worth noting that, unlike say, Jamaica Kincaid, whose work is full of bitterness against the colonial oppressors who taught her to speak and write their language so well, Chamoiseau's Creole characters really love France and its ideals. It makes for an interesting paradox about ex-colonies and literary achievement. For, unlike the former British possessions in the Caribbean, Martinique is not independent. It is still a part of France. Those former British colonies have brought forth some of the best writers in English of this century. V. S. Naipaul, from Trinidad, and the brilliant poet Derek Walcott, from Barbados, are only the most celebrated of some spectacular talents. Yet this much-hyped, Goncourt Prize–winning book never even approaches the quality of the least of their works.

Jorge Luis Borges, an Argentine, is supposed to have said that his country's

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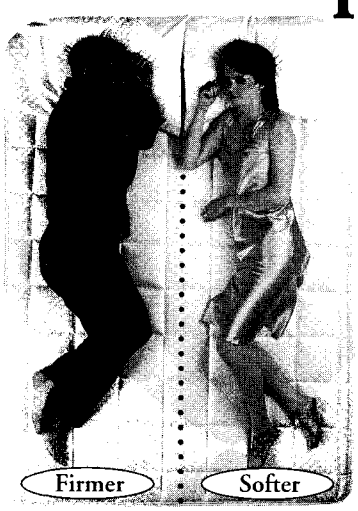

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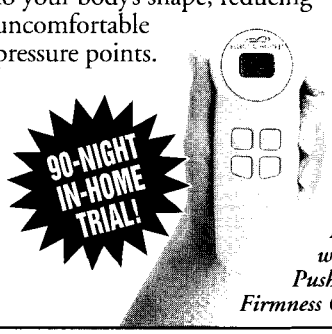

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greatest tragedy was to have been colonized by the Spanish rather than the English. However, at least as far as literature goes, the Latin Americans were fortunate not to have been colonized by the French. □

How the Vietnam War Was Won

BRIAN CROZIER

ON MY first visit to Hanoi, in March 1952, I had a long talk with General de Linarès, the French commander in Tonking. A few weeks earlier, he had withdrawn the French force from Hao Binh. As I was leaving, he murmured: "I wish I had Giap on my side."

A year earlier, this defeatist remark would not have made sense. The dynamic General de Lattre had inflicted a crushing defeat on General Vo Nguyen Giap's forces on January 14, 1951, at Vinh Yen. Moreover, this was his third consecutive victory. A year later, de Lattre would die of cancer.

Curiously, in his dense but highly readable biography of Giap, John Colvin does not mention de Linarès,

Giap: Volcano under Snow, by John Colvin (Soho, 336 pp., $25)

although he does mention de Lattre's successor as commander-in-chief, General Raoul Salan, whose first concern was to evacuate various French-held strongpoints, which de Lattre would doubtless have defended. Salan's place in history was not improved when, in 1960, he led a failed coup to overthrow Charles de Gaulle.

But then certain omissions are to be expected, since this is not a true biography of its titular character. *Giap: Volcano under Snow* is really a military history of the two Vietnam wars.

Born in 1910 to a landowning father, Giap (who is still alive) inherited a name he might have chosen for himself, for Vo means "military." The deeper influence on Giap's career came from Ho Chi Minh, whom he met as a young man. One of Colvin's more interesting revelations is that this military leader of genius never had any military training. The appellation "Volcano under Snow" was a creation of the Communist propagandists in Hanoi: a reference to the power and energy bubbling beneath a visage of cold composure.

Was Giap in fact a military genius? Some Western soldiers have contested this label. His earlier set-piece battles in Vietnam I were disastrous. His later victories owed more to the political fallout of attrition and to his mastery of jungle logistics. General Navarre had selected the isolated fortified village of Dien Bien Phu for a decisive battle, and estimated that the Viet Minh (Ho's League for the Independence of Vietnam) would be unable to maintain more than two divisions and twenty thousand coolies in the area. In the event, for months, *eighty thousand* coolies, wheeling arms and food through the jungle, kept *four* divisions supplied. The total defeat of the French garrison ended France's determination to fight on.

At the Geneva conference in 1954, the new French premier, Pierre Mendès-France, made a deal with the Soviet foreign minister, Vyacheslav Molotov: divide Vietnam along the 17th Parallel, and France will ditch the European Defense Community, which would have created a Franco-German army. Strangely, Colvin does not mention this decisive deal, which left Ho Chi Minh and Giap feeling betrayed, since all they had gained was half of their country.

Vietnam II presented different problems. Giap had infiltrated into South Vietnam thousands of his trained fighters, who terrorized many more thousands into joining the Vietcong (as the Viet Minh now called itself). In contrast, the South Vietnamese army was prone to mass desertions at difficult moments. Initially supportive of President Diem, the American advisors in Saigon gave covert approval to a coup against him. Both Diem and his brother Nhu were assassinated on the night of November 1, 1963, three weeks before the murder of President Kennedy.

Two events dominated the next phase. In Moscow, Khrushchev was overthrown in October 1964. His successor, Brezhnev, sent a high-powered team to Hanoi in February 1965; soon after, Soviet advanced weaponry was being delivered to North Vietnam. Then, in June, President Johnson authorized the use of U.S. combat troops in Vietnam.

The contrast between the rival superpowers' pledges was crucial. In North Vietnam, there were no Soviet combat troops; in South Vietnam, the American military presence was highly visible, and exploitable by the international Communist propaganda machine, which

Giap's army massacred thousands at Hué, but the event was never seen on American TV sets.

presented the U.S. as an imperialist power. Another, and in the end decisive, factor was the ubiquitous little box. As Sir Robert Thompson memorably put it: "The [Vietnam] war was lost on the television screens of the United States."

Possibly the best example of this proposition was the Tet offensive, launched on January 30, 1968. Giap's army held onto the ancient imperial capital of Hué for 26 days, massacring thousands: an event never seen on America's TV screens. The final round was an attack on the U.S. Embassy in Saigon. Militarily, the offensive was a failure, but the message to the American public was that they faced an endless conflict which they could win only by invading the North, thus risking Soviet and Chinese retaliation.

Demoralized, President Johnson opted out of a re-election campaign. President Nixon, a strategic realist, chose escalation in search of an honorable peace. On paper, he got something like that with the Paris Agreements of January 1973; but with the South Vietnamese left to their own devices, the ultimate victor was General Giap.

John Colvin's detailed description of the two wars is gripping. The reader is there, in the tropical heat, listening to the twitterings of the jungle, sniffing that odoriferous Vietnamese sauce *nuoc mam*, made of rotting fish and sea water, frustrated by the vanishing Vietcong after each murderous attack. □

Mr. Crozier covered the first Vietnam war for Reuters in 1952.

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FILM

Bal(lard)oney

JOHN SIMON

JAMES Ballard and his wife, Catherine, are turned on by car crashes, and the wounds and deaths they lead to. If these do not by themselves induce orgasm, there is huggermugger sex in the front or back seat to get the job done. Alternatively, one can have intercourse anywhere, even in bed, so long as one fantasizes about automotive mayhem or its participants. This is the premise of David Cronenberg's ***Crash***, fairly (but not altogether) faithfully based on J. G. Ballard's novel, and a piece of failed pornography.

Pornography, in my view, is a work existing for the sole purpose of sexual arousal, without any regard for truth or existential relevance. I am not against it, so long as it is kept out of the hands of children. But of all pornography, *Crash* is least likely to be catching: few people would risk car crashes for sexual thrills; even fewer could afford it.

As the movie begins, Catherine enjoys sex with a stranger on top of an airplane engine, and James likes to snatch a quickie where the risk of discovery is greatest. (The even worse novel dispenses with such feeble attempts at etiology.) One day, James crashes into an oncoming car, whose driver is spectacularly killed; the victim's passenger and wife, Dr. Helen Remington, is so aroused that she instantly bares her breast at the wounded James. We cut to the hospital, where, by James's bedside, Catherine, too, is oddly affected, as is a stranger, Vaughan, who comes around photographing Ballard's wounds. Thus is born a *folie à deux*, *trois*, or *quatre*, depending on your mode of counting.

Vaughan is the Canadian director's most egregious error. In the novel, he is a grubby, pockmarked weirdo who restages celebrity car crashes for audiences of like-mindless fanatics. In the film, he is played by Elias Koteas, an actor yet more repellent, so that no one—in his wrong mind even—would want to get involved with him, psychically or sexually, as James and Catherine do. Still, the only vaguely titillating scene has the couple in bed fantasizing intercourse with Vaughan–Koteas, which strikes me as sicker than humping a hood ornament. But Deborah Kara Unger, who plays Catherine, has a quality of ecstatic sensual absorption the other actresses cannot manage.

Holly Hunter wasn't Cronenberg's first choice for Helen, but shouldn't even have been his last. She earnestly says and does the perverse or merely sexual things demanded of her, as if reciting the Girl Scout manual or working out in an aerobics class. The equally unsexy Rosanna Arquette plays Gabrielle, a scarred waif who clanks about in a body suit and braces whose metallic content might be the envy of C3P0. Her copulations with James and, later, Helen in a car are even logistically preposterous: it's like trying to fit an ironing board into a microwave oven and then having sex with it. *Crash* is less lewd than ludicrous.

> Crash *is as compelling as the endless interviews in which the director-scenarist has been explicating its profundities.*

The film is most risible when Vaughan–Koteas goes metaphysical: "For the first time, the car crash is a fertilizing rather than a destructive event: a liberation of sexual energy that mediates the sexuality of those who died with an intensity impossible in any other form." Ballard wrote the novel in 1973, when Barthes and Foucault were still going strong, and such drivel was taken seriously; today, and on film, it is as if someone had crossbred the outtakes of Eric Rohmer and Peter Greenaway—in a car, of course. And when ever more fantastic games of murderous bumper cars are played with what seems to be the entire rush-hour traffic of Toronto, you lose all respect even for the Toronto highway police.

Peter Suschitzky shoots it all in gelid, steel blue and iron grey tones, for clinical detachment as well as to highlight naked flesh and copious gore. Miss Unger is good only in the sexual scenes, but as James, James Spader is, I'm afraid, perfect for all of it. No other actor so oozes spineless, slack-jawed kinkiness even when it is not called for. Otherwise, the film is about as compelling as the endless interviews in which the director-scenarist has been explicating its profundities: a crashing bore.

■ Alan J. Pakula is a careful and accomplished craftsman whose films are made with every attribute befitting the master, short of the *je ne sais quoi* that would elevate them into art. This, needless to say, does not keep him from being one of Hollywood's better directors, though not, alas, with his latest effort.

The Devil's Own has come in for its share of advance publicity thanks to abundant rumors: its co-stars, Harrison Ford and Brad Pitt, not getting along; the script not ready when shooting began, and continually rewritten thereafter. Further, Pitt was loudly badmouthing the movie, though he later recanted. Gossip helps, but perhaps not enough to guarantee success. The three credited screenwriters—Kevin Jarre, David Aaron Cohen, Vincent Patrick—have wildly divergent œuvres, though the names that end up in the credits may have little to do with the film.

This scenario, in any case, is a hybrid right off. We start with a quiet family dinner in Northern Ireland. Then eight-year-old Frankie McGuire's da is brutally murdered at the dinner table, turning the traumatized boy into the devil's own. We gather that the killers were of the Protestant persuasion, for we next meet Frankie as a young street-fighter, the scourge of the British in Belfast.

In this street-fighting, the Brits, who set a trap for Frankie and his pals, are presented as no less Satan's own—as when their chief kills a wounded IRA sniper coldly at close range. This may be deemed excusable in civil warfare, but the chief is played by Simon Jones, an actor whose sneers are magisterial, and

Mr. Simon is NR*'s film critic.*

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may hurt more than bullets. These action sequences are well made, but cannot escape the sense of *déjà vu*, especially when there is no suspense: Frankie, i.e., Brad Pitt, cannot die this early on.

We skip ahead again: Frankie, now called Rory Devaney, arrives in New York to buy Stinger missiles. An Irish-American judge and IRA sympathizer, on the premise that in plain sight is the best place to hide, lodges Rory with a policeman on Staten Island: the fatherly Sgt. Tom O'Meara (Harrison Ford), married to warm-hearted Sheila (Margaret Colin), with a brood of daughters thrilled to have Brad Pitt in their midst. Rory gets a blue-collar job and slowly goes about acquiring those missiles. I have no idea how one buys such fancy weaponry, and neither, I suspect, have the screenwriters. It all goes through a diabolical businessman, Billy Burke (Treat Williams, in an obvious performance), and is very fuzzy storytelling.

More important is the growing affection between fatherless Rory and sonless Tom, against the cozy O'Meara background. Rory also makes contact with an old IRA chum and Megan, the sister of a slain other one. The story dawdles along at a pace so leisurely that you think Rory will forget all about the Troubles and his mission, marry Megan, and continue as Tom's surrogate son in the house next door. For well over an hour this Staten Island idyll threatens to become The Making of an American.

There is also Tom's police work, full of radiant clichés about good-cop activities. My favorite is when an escaping dreadlocked young black, whom other officers are ready to shoot, is humanely caught by Tom. It turns out the youth was running because he was too bashful to present himself to the cashier with some condoms. For such delicate sensibility, the paternal cop promptly lets him go, although we do not actually see Tom paying for the boy's rubbers.

After long hibernation, the story resumes, and works up to the typical ending, where noble outlaw and nobler cop fight it out to the death (guess whose), presented as supreme male bonding. Brad Pitt manages a good Belfast accent; not enough, however, to wag an entire performance. Harrison Ford exudes evenhandedly manly warmth and manly pain. The best work comes from Margaret Colin and Natascha McElhone (Megan), as well as Gordon Willis's camera; the rest is the devil's own. □

ART

Martha Stewart Meets Kropotkin

JAMES GARDNER

IF one learns anything at all from years of going to the Whitney, it is that you shouldn't read too much into its Biennial exhibitions. Though widely seen as the last word on our visual culture over the previous two years, in fact these shows say more about their curators. Politics was rampant in 1993 because Elisabeth Sussman wanted it that way, while formalism resurfaced two years later because the torch had been passed to Klaus Kertess.

And what is the gist of its latest incarnation? One step forward, two steps back, seems to be the guiding principle here. Thus, while the 1995 exhibition seemed, in its (relative) formalist sobriety, to step decisively out of the morass of jammering message art that had characterized the 1993 installment, the present version offers a "correction," with message once again gaining the ascendancy over mere form.

At the same time, we see a different kind of political art from that of 1993. It has been softened and sweetened in a way that does indeed reflect changes in the art world itself. In one sense, the exhibition is the bastard child of its two immediate predecessors. Whereas one was largely political and the other largely formalist, the present exhibition is political *and* formalist, according to the taste of Lisa Phillips and her assistant, Louise Neri. It is a compromise that recalls those spreads in glamour magazines where successful women professionals, preferably with good feminist credentials, are seen modeling the latest designs, as if to prove that one can be a prominent career woman without looking like a tractor, and a follower of fashion without being a bubblehead. In the latest version of eating one's cake and having it, the Whitney proves that one can be politically *engagé* and also well turned out: Martha Stewart meets Kropotkin.

Four years ago, in the most rampantly political Biennial anyone had ever seen, there was something literally smelly and unclean about the art on display. Everything from a tar-covered station-wagon to Sue Williams's puddle of simulated vomit was oversized and almost aggressively inept. Now the art has become small and dainty and much of it comes within sniffing distance of mediocrity. Even Sue Williams, heeding the dictates of the market, is behaving herself: in her pleasant pastel abstractions, the recurring motif of genitalia will be visible only to those who are closer to the paintings than they should be. In a similar vein, the famous Dadaist Richard Prince continues to rehash borscht-belt jokes scribbled (with the requisite ironic distance, naturally) onto canvas, but he has joined these to quite unobjectionable abstractions. What his point was in doing so is, of course, another issue altogether. One sees the self-same process taking place in the once furious vulgarity of Lari Pittman, who made such a splash four years ago. Now this artist has become, well, delicately vulgar. Meanwhile, Kerry James Marshall's cutsey engrafting of black children onto a context of Middle America, with white picket fences and manicured lawns, is obviously supposed to be the last word in post-modern cheek, even though much the same thing was seen in the last Biennial in the work of Roger Colescott. But what is so surprising here is how hard the artist is working to be, if not good, at least salable. Gone, clearly, are the days when dealers could sell anything to anyone.

This year's Whitney Biennial comes within sniffing distance of mediocrity.

Some of the most accomplished art,

Mr. Gardner, NR's art critic, is the author most recently of The Age of Extremism, *to be published next month by Birch Lane.*

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from the point of view of craft, comes in the form of the reconstituted Persian miniatures of Shahzia Sikander and the pastels of Francesco Clemente. No one seemed too bothered that neither was American. But then, the Whitney, though chartered to display only American art, has been chafing under that restraint for some years now.

In every Whitney Biennial there seems to be one cross-over object—like William Wegman's unnecessarily celebrated dog-in-drag photographs—which, notwithstanding its post-modern attitude, manages to get into all the papers and to attract the camera crews. Whenever classes are brought to the exhibition to be taught that museums aren't threatening and can be fun, it's the first thing they see. This year the honor goes to Tony Oursler, whose literally talking heads steal the show. With sophisticated video equipment, he manages to project faces onto small fabric heads in such a way as to endow their inanimate sackcloth with vitality. Already the art world is uneasy. Cries of gimmickry have been heard all the way from SoHo to 59th Street: Oursler is starting to repeat himself. One has seen it all before. An artist who, at this late date, thinks of creating something that someone might want, for example, to see is just not playing by the rules. □

NEW YORK JOURNAL

Under the Metropolitan

DANIEL A. KAUFMAN

IN E. L. Konigsburg's *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*, Claudia and Jamie Kincaid run away from home and take up residence in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. They are soon entangled in a mystery surrounding a statue of an angel, which was bought by the museum at an auction for $225 and whose creator is not known. The children's search for clues takes them, in the darkness of night, into the Met's halls and galleries, where they discover an imprint on the cloth beneath the statue, three circles with an inscribed "M," the mark of Michelangelo Buonarroti.

It was with a similar sense of mystery and excitement that I entered the same museum several weeks ago to discover what lies beneath the floors and beyond the exhibit-room walls. I knew that the Metropolitan's reserves include some three million art objects—staggeringly more than could ever be shown. What would I find in the museum's nether regions? I imagined dark, cobwebbed rooms, lost paintings of the great masters, and dust-covered crates overflowing with golden goblets and sparkling jewelry.

The truth, while less romantic, turns out to be far more interesting than my gothic fantasy. Philippe de Montebello, director of the Metropolitan, characterizes his museum as "encyclopedic," a term that connotes an orientation toward research that is in addition to and distinct from a museum's displaying role. In the light of this dual mission, the Met has dealt with its undisplayed reserves by developing highly sophisticated storage, conservation, and restoration facilities, designed to keep the works in as close to mint condition as possible.

Intrigued by these efforts, I arranged an inspection of the Met's pre-eminent preservation, restoration, and research facility, the Antonio Ratti Textile Center, which occupies 25,000 square feet beneath the main floor. While we descended the stairs from the Medieval wing to the Ratti Center, Giovanna Fiorino-Iannace, the Center's manager, explained that virtually all the Met's textile reserves are in this facility. So far from the dusty, decaying crypt I had imagined, the storage areas—vast, surgically white chambers, lined with cabinets and preparation tables—resemble nothing so much as the futuristic laboratories of *The Andromeda Strain*. Claudia and Jamie Kincaid, meet Michael Crichton.

One area is devoted to the storage of large rugs and tapestries, with great racks of aluminum and paper tubes, while another is filled with cabinets equipped with sliding drawers for flat storage of the smaller textiles. One drawer slid out to reveal a sixteenth-century Spanish cope, embroidered all over with gleaming silver thread; another contained some of the more fragile lengths of the blue silk curtains from the Hampton State Court Bed, currently on display in the new Aitken Galleries of the English Decorative Arts.

From a computer in the library, one can call up a scanned image of virtually any textile in the Center's collection; I watched a photographer in a dimly lit room snapping pictures of various pieces for scanning. Researchers, having found in the computer what they are looking for, can request to see the object itself, which will be brought out and placed on one of the wide, immaculate tables. This time, someone had asked to see several paper-thin pieces of lace, whose delicate patterns were barely visible against the pristine white cloth on which they were laid.

In another portion of the building, the Metropolitan has brought together storage, research, and display in a manner suited as much to the amateur as to the scholar. Tucked away in the American wing is a small staircase leading up to the Henry R. Luce Center, where more than 8,500 objects from the Met's reserves of American fine and decorative art are displayed in typological rather than exhibition style. Computer terminals allow access to an on-line catalogue of the entire department. From masses of silver and pewter to rows of paintings, stacked one on top of the other, treasures abound. In one aisle, I discovered a series of portraits of American painters. Turning one corner in this maze of glass cases, I found myself amidst a cluster of pictures by Mary Cassatt; rounding another, I came face to face with a case of works by John Singer Sargent.

Would I find cobwebbed rooms, dust-covered crates?

I never found my cobwebbed crypts or lost masters, but the great scientific machine which operates behind this repository of the artistic achievements of the world's civilizations is a source of wonderment and awe, more so than the most labyrinthine gothic vault you could imagine. □

Mr. Kaufman teaches philosophy at the City University of New York.

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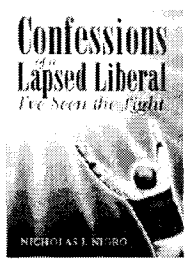

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RODMAN

(Continued from page 39)

speech last October is a hint that China sees them as blunting a capability it is now developing. It is also time to restore our *export controls*—negligently allowed to lapse after the Cold War's end—to ensure against Chinese diversion of advanced technologies to military uses. Indeed, our entire relationship with the Chinese military needs to be reassessed.

Human rights, at bottom, are a matter of political structure. Particular abuses can sometimes be modified by international pressures. But a Communist government will make such concessions only on the margin—that is, when they do not affect the survival or nature of the regime. A serious change in the human-rights situation will be the product of China's political evolution, which there is no obvious way for the U.S. to determine. In the meantime, a certain moral distance should be kept, even as business is conducted.

A post-Communist China will be a nationalist China (small "n" if not capital "n"). On most of the territorial disputes that involve China and its neighbors, Taipei and Peking agree. A post-Communist China will be both powerful and nationalistic—and therefore a geopolitical problem—even if its internal system is more benign.

There is an absurd debate about what to call our China policy. President Clinton has banned the word "containment" from our political discourse, much as President Ford tried to ban the word "détente." Mr. Clinton will probably fail, just as Mr. Ford did.

Ironically, the approach outlined here is closer to George Kennan's original doctrine of 1947 than is the approach urged today by advocates of "containing" China. For Kennan, the Soviet internal system was deeply flawed, but our ability to affect it was limited. Kennan suggested that if the West firmly and patiently resisted Soviet expansion, eventually a new generation of Soviet leaders would be forced to turn inward to confront their internal contradictions. This was a brilliant forecast of what occurred.

Today's advocates of "containing" China are focused less on its foreign policy than on the evil of its domestic system. This ideological impulse allows one to speculate that, once the regime is indeed replaced by a post-Communist government that still poses difficulties in foreign policy, these critics will lose interest—or will incline toward a rosier view of China, as they do today with post-Communist Russia. They hold fast to the Jeffersonian equation of democracy and peacelovingness, with less regard to geopolitical continuities that are bound to exist as a permanent responsibility for U.S. foreign policy.

An approach like Kennan's original concept thus turns out to be the moderate position today—midway between the Clinton complacency and the neoconservative enthusiasm, between a "deeper engagement" (which is vague on how to deter challenges) and a campaign of ideological warfare to bring the regime down (which is vague as to concrete policy prescriptions to accomplish this). Ronald Reagan reminded us that we have no reason to embrace the legitimacy of a regime that so contradicts our moral precepts. But the operational reality is that our leverage over China, both incentives and disincentives, works most effectively on its external behavior. *That* we can influence, and must. By doing so, we shall also—to borrow Kennan's language of 1947—"increase enormously the strains under which [the Chinese system] must operate," and thereby promote the historic transformation within China for which we hope. □

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ON THE RIGHT / Wm. F. Buckley Jr.

Should We Be Embarrassed?

NEW YORK, APRIL 1

As one would expect, the point is being made (notably in the *New York Times* on Monday, March 31) that what we are so heated about China's doing is no different, really, from what the United States does more or less as a matter of course. The headline for the well-researched story by John M. Broder is, "Political Meddling by Outsiders: Not New for U.S." There follow accounts of American interventions, overt and covert, in other nations in the world ever since the end of the Second World War. The question is raised: Why should we be indignant over Chinese interventions given that we do the same kind of thing?

Never, ever, was the Latin maxim more applicable: *Quod licet Jovi, non licet bovi.* What's okay for Jove to do isn't okay for a cow to do. The Latin was presumably an early exploration of basic ethical distinction-making. During the Cold War, faced on one occasion with a sally in moral equivalence, I put it this way: There is a difference between pushing an old lady into the way of an oncoming bus, and pushing an old lady out of the way of an oncoming bus. It simply will not do to say in both cases that you are pushing an old lady around.

The two great historical vindications of U.S. intervention were France in 1947 and Italy in 1948. It is diplomatic not to dwell on the point, but those of us not engaged in diplomacy can rue the memory of those days. France and Italy were entirely free to do as they liked politically. But two years after we rescued the French from Nazi occupation, their country was very nearly paralyzed by the French Communist Party, operating largely through labor unions that it dominated. In Italy, four years after Mussolini was strung up, the Communists actually threatened to take power in a perfectly run democratic election. Pope Pius XII did the Church's best by leveling a sentence of excommunication on any Italian who voted the Communist ticket. The CIA got very heavily into the act and helped the Italian people to deliver Italy from the Italians.

There aren't too many who deplore the activity of the U.S. Government in those theaters at that time, but opposition is still heated on interventions elsewhere. Most notably in Chile. In 1964 we invested money in helping Eduardo Frei defeat Salvador Allende. In 1970 we invested insufficient money, and Allende won the election. Within months he began the systematic erosion of political liberty, and soon talked of suspending all constitutional rights. He was overthrown by General Pinochet in a coup in September 1973. How decisive was the role of the United States is still disputed. Because General Pinochet used strongarm tactics during the next ten years there are still those who permit themselves to say that Allende should have been left alone. Allende's view of desirable government was symbolized by the large picture he hung above his desk, of his hero, Fidel Castro.

On the Chinese question we begin, or ought to do so, by registering a little measured indignation at a foreign government which is itself explicitly dedicated to the curtailment of freedom and keeps some millions of its own people in prison camps, and bishops and priests and ministers in detention, moving into the United States to try to persuade people to vote for the Democratic Party against the Republican Party. That definitely is on the order of pushing an old lady into the way of an oncoming bus.

The basic distinctions were attempted during the late Forties. The Moral Equivalence Vendors were saying that the Communist Party U.S.A. had every right to proceed as other parties do. An institutional counteroffensive was mounted in legislation (the Smith Act, the Mundt–Nixon Bill, the Internal Security Act) and in congressional investigations (the McCarran and HUAC investigations) in which the point was driven home that the Communist Party was not an indigenous movement. The Yale University Press series on Communism has, in one volume, absolutely validated the suspicion that the American Communist Party was simply a branch of Soviet diplomacy.

Even so, it should not surprise us that the Chinese government would use its increasing inventory of weapons in order to attempt to shape U.S. policy in directions amenable to it. It was not entirely convincing for U.S. dignitaries to scold China for this act of diplomatic free enterprise. Who are to be deplored are the American agents of such an enterprise. To begin with, they violated American law. Beyond that, they are prepared to use money from a totalitarian machine to attempt to contaminate democratic practice. It is important to get mad at the right people. □

"There goes one for the books—he had a very happy childhood and now he feels guilty *about it."*

Why the Politicians Do It

NEW YORK, APRIL 4

Well, today's presidential indignity is a donation to the Democratic Party in 1995 wrested—in Havana, no less—from a convicted felon who in return got to meet Al in Miami and then to attend a Christmas reception in the White House and then get his picture taken with the First Lady. Actually, Mr. Cabrera got all that stuff for nothing, because his donation was furtively returned. He can hang his picture up and look at it without any distraction, because he is back in jail after his most recent conviction, for drug smuggling.

What distresses is the utter political avarice. It is one thing to practice six hours a day to conquer the violin, or six hours a day to become a gymnast. But the future for artists and athletes depends on their attraction to audiences that come and go. The politicians acquire the power to command.

When the government raises taxes or issues regulations or redesigns the Constitution, it is binding all citizens to its purposes. The exercise of power is indeed a great aphrodisiac, and we leave it to the imagination what exactly Mr. Cabrera expected to get from the Democratic money-raiser in Havana. If somebody is in jail, who is in the commanding position, the prisoner or the jailer? It isn't easy to deduce, from the Cabrera situation. It's much easier to speculate about who owes whom in the Hubbell situation. The White House establishment fetched up a half-million dollars' worth of business for

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Mr. Hubbell. What has he done for them? Silence.

People have got accustomed to activity by political jobseekers that in any other perspective would mark the man out as really quite offensive. They ask you for money. They recite their grand qualifications for office. They agree to spend every minute of their lives in activity no other calling in the world would make understandable, kissing babies, flattering eunuchs, succumbing to grandiosity, all of these in order to exercise power at the expense of their constituents. The lengths to which Mr. Clinton has demonstrably gone—and this has nothing to do with Whitewater or Paula Jones—to cling to his throne tells us something about him, but something also about the rest of us, co-conspirators in the great democratic political power game.

Jim Lehrer's *NewsHour* tuned in the other day to somebody associated with the militia movement in Minnesota. The militiaman wasn't very bright, but after reciting the expected self-exonerative litany (he and his organization oppose terrorism, do not believe in revolution) he did say that there was reason for Americans to fear the government. He trotted out Waco, which is fair enough—that was a terrible venture in fascistic intervention. But the poor militiaman did indeed speak for many who wonder at the lengths to which the government goes.

The civil-liberties folk rely heavily on what they call the slippery slope. If the government denies the bookseller the right to handle the Marquis de Sade, the next thing you know he will be denied the right to handle James Joyce.

Forget, for the moment, the logical postulate, which absolutizes the proposition that if you give an inch you must give a mile. Still, there is some residual appeal. And here we have a gloriously useful index, given us by the marketplace. How many dollars are spent voluntarily, how many coercively? We are spending more on taxes than on food, health, and shelter. A measure of the anxiety of the politician to achieve office is: How much power, having achieved said office, will he proceed to exercise? There are some platonic politicians who will seek office even if the budget for their cockpit is zero.

But not many. The huge, strenuous effort by Mr. Clinton and his votaries to undergo any sacrifice, accept any humiliation, in order to achieve power can only be understood in terms of orgasmic satisfactions. Somebody calls you up and says, Joe, would you please spend the next eleven months speaking eight times a day asking people for money and then mixing it up and cooing over their children, their dogs, and their custard pies? You are nonplussed and perhaps you'd think to say, Is this God calling? But no, it is a local political leader who is on the line. So you reflect and say, What do I get in return?

The answer is: You get to flex your muscles in the public square, and other people are made to do what you tell them to do.

There are too many who say that's a good bargain. If the rewards of office were trimmed, people could elect, instead, to spend the time practicing the violin, or practicing for the marathon. □

Any Prospect For Jury Reform?

NEW YORK, APRIL 8

The attempted trial of Timothy McVeigh for blowing up the building in Oklahoma City is running into jury-selection problems on a scale that dramatizes the creeping immobilization of the original idea, which was that we were all entitled to be judged by a jury of our peers. The primary impediment is the unexamined paradox. On the one hand we are committed to the proposition that all jurors, old, young, white, black, gay, straight, are "peers." On the other hand, we are, in case after case, instructed that if there is any evidence of discrimination against a potential juror because *X* is black—or a woman; or a man; or Hispanic; or white—then the trial was not just.

The complexity of current practices was illustrated a few years ago when the Supreme Court sent down the ruling that a prosecutor could not exercise his peremptory challenge if its motive was to exclude someone because he was—black. Read white, old, young, whatever. Now here we have one abstraction battling against another. The first is the abstract right of the prosecutor, or the defense attorney, to look at a juror and say to himself: I think that man is going to vote against the kind of case I intend to make against, or for, this particular defendant. So, throw him out. A "peremptory" challenge means, by definition, one not to be questioned; one that puts an end to any argument.

If, then, a defense attorney reasons to himself that a potential juror is white, middle-class, Republican in politics, and very likely a hardliner on the question of law and order, he might very well exercise his veto to keep him away. And the complement obviously also holds. If the prosecutor has up a defendant who is black and young and appealing to maternal instincts, he might be inclined to exercise a veto against a motherly black woman.

The jury-selection process is becoming a very big business. Anyone familiar with any of the fifty books written about the O. J. Simpson trial will know something about the efforts made on both sides to guard against anticipated inclinations of jurors. The very fact of the time and money spent in the process is an empirical challenge to the notion that a jury of one's peers is an attainable goal in routine circumstances. Consider a hypothetical case: The defendant is black, the jury is 100 per cent black—Scenario One. Scenario Two: the defendant is black and the jury is 100 per cent white. It is entirely reasonable to guess that the likelihood of conviction is greater in the second than in the first situation.

But what then do we do in our quixotic search for a jury of our peers? Insist on one-half white, one-half black? But why not 100 per cent black for blacks, if in search of peers? And the reverse for white defendants?

A recent news story spoke of the difficulties in asking juries to adjudicate civil trials involving abstruse questions of finance, accounting, cyber technology, or whatever. One judge, by one account, pulled in a juror and asked her what was meant by "software." She replied to the effect that software was something soft, in the sense that when you let it fall to the ground, there is no clattering sound. The trial in question was over delicate differences of opinion involving complicated contentions about rights and wrongs that could not reasonably be adjudicated save by men and women familiar with the technological territory.

At the criminal level, a reasonable reform might say: Select juries by lottery. The first 12 names drawn become the jury, unless it is established that any one of them has a personal brief for, or against, the defendant.

But any suggestion of any judicial reform runs up against the judicial ideologues. It is one more irony of liberal doublethink that on the one hand everything should be fluid in the evolution of constitutional practice, but nothing should change respecting the authority of the courts, and traditional practices in the judicial system. The liberal defenders of the faith very nearly joined Heaven's Gate in protest against Congressman Tom DeLay's proposal that constitutionally contumacious judges should be subject to impeachment, though that is not an extra-rational proposal. What will it take to persuade reformers that the jury system, as now practiced, is broke? That it sorely needs fixing? How many O.J.s do we have to acquit before that becomes evident? □

(Universal Press Syndicate)

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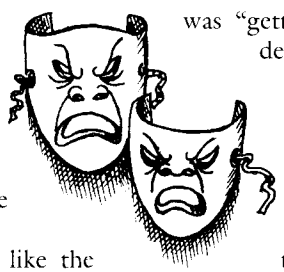
THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER

FLORENCE KING

GET out your vocabulary cards, it's timid–wimp–cave time again. Michael Reagan has quit the Republican Party and says that he won't return until it "acts like a winner and not a loser."

He was fairly temperate as conservative GOP-bashers go—and we go pretty far. He used "cave in" only once, eschewed the real Roget stuff like "pusillanimous," and came nowhere near Wesley Pruden's regular references to the "Gelded Age." Still, his remarks pulsated with the unmistakable glee of the conservative scorned. Nothing gives us more pleasure than going after "moderate" Republicans as immoderately as possible. To air is human, to lambaste is divine.



GOP-bashing looks a lot like the "Revolution of Contempt," Lamartine's name for the overthrow in 1848 of Louis Philippe, who called himself the "Bourgeois King" and removed the fleur-de-lis from the Palais Royal to show people how nice he was. "Louis Philippe afforded France some of the happiest years in her history," wrote André Maurois, "but the French do not live on happiness." Once their contempt for Louis Philippe was aroused, they ignored the widespread prosperity of his reign and had a revolution anyway.

Conservatives don't live on happiness either. Our Louis Philippe was Bob Dole, who so aroused our contempt that we developed an irresistible impulse to strike out at him. It was easy to do thanks to the Dole persona. Every man who ever felt awkward and square could get back at himself by kicking Dole. Every woman who ever feigned raptness while a boring date droned on in a monotone could give Dole the gate. Every old person who ever forgot a name or fell to rambling could call Dole senile. It was his bad luck to be the universal frame that fits the memory picture known as the Worst Night of My Life.

Expressing contempt for "Poorbobdole" soon became more important than winning the election. Each time yet another leading conservative columnist called on him to withdraw from the race, our secret pleasure—admit it—was palpable. So was the columnist's. Cal Thomas almost succeeded in swaddling his in sanctimony, but Arianna Huffington was obviously having fun when she wrote that Dole's insistence on doing the same wrong things over and over was "getting perilously close to the definition of insanity," and that if he did not withdraw, convention delegates "will be forced to consider patricide." She meant to deny him the nomination, but metaphors like this cropped up in too many columns by too many writers to be entirely syntactical in scope.

Unspent contempt for Dole is behind the current wave of GOP-bashing, but getting over him won't help. We'll always have a Poorbobdole because contempt will continue to breed as long as television supplies the familiarity.

The up-close and personal view of our leaders puts us in such proximity to every facial tic, nervous gesture, and unconscious habit that we react in ways once limited to the custom-staled marriage bed and the jaundiced view across the breakfast table. Does Pat Buchanan whicker after a triumphal statement? "Stop making that noise!" Does Pete Domenici purse his lips when temporizing? "If you do that one more time I'll scream!" Liberals are immune to this because they don't crave loftiness, but conservatives feel forlorn at the merest hint of clay feet. You know the sinking sensation I'm talking about. If it weren't for C-SPAN I never would have known that Newt Gingrich talks like a term paper in heat, but I know it now.

The Revolution of Contempt is as old as television, but interestingly, it never touched Nixon, whose gift for inspiring towering emotions never flagged. The hatred was pure and the pity was Aristotelian, pulsing with talk of "hubris" and "tragic flaws." The temptation to shine the lamp of antiquity on Nixon proved irresistible to his critics and ultimately armored him: a man called "Agonistes" simply does not invite contempt.

Ford got a little but it was good-natured; Jimmy Carter got a lot but it was couched in the word "impotence," if you can call that couching. Reagan was contemptuous of contempt, in contrast to Bush, who seemed almost comfortable with it, as if he had been registered for it at birth.

BILL Clinton is so much more contemptible than Louis Philippe that we must turn to another upheaval of 1848 to find an apt comparison. It happened in placid Bavaria when adventuress Lola Montez seduced King Ludwig I into spending the state treasury on her. Casting discretion to the winds, Ludwig followed his mistress around Munich like a puppy, forbidding the police to arrest her when she horsewhipped the postmaster and tried to run over the butcher. Finally, when the army was near mutiny and the prime minister had threatened suicide, a howling mob of once-stolid burghers ran Lola out of town and forced the sexually enslaved Ludwig to abdicate.

Something like this should have happened to Clinton by now, but he has deflected contempt in Nixonian fashion by displaying traits that tempt his critics to explain him in terms drawn from another sacrosanct field of classical studies: Freudian psychoanalysis.

People have begun to sense that there is something wrong with the man; apart from his "distinguishing characteristic" and well north of it, he is not as others are. The telltale adjectives are showing up; his lying is "affectless," his appetites are "compulsive," and *Human Events* has been running a huge ad for a book that calls him a psychopath. Stand by for "mirthless" smile (he's got one).

This is not contempt but fascination, which may explain the strange helplessness that has come over Republicans, and the recent upsurge of anti-anti-Clintonism that has even made some conservatives call off their dogs. We don't want to impeach him because if we got rid of him we would miss the end of the movie: a remake of *Spellbound* with Bubba as the Gregory Peck nut case and Janet Reno as Ingrid Bergman. □

Miss King is the author of The Florence King Reader *and other books.*

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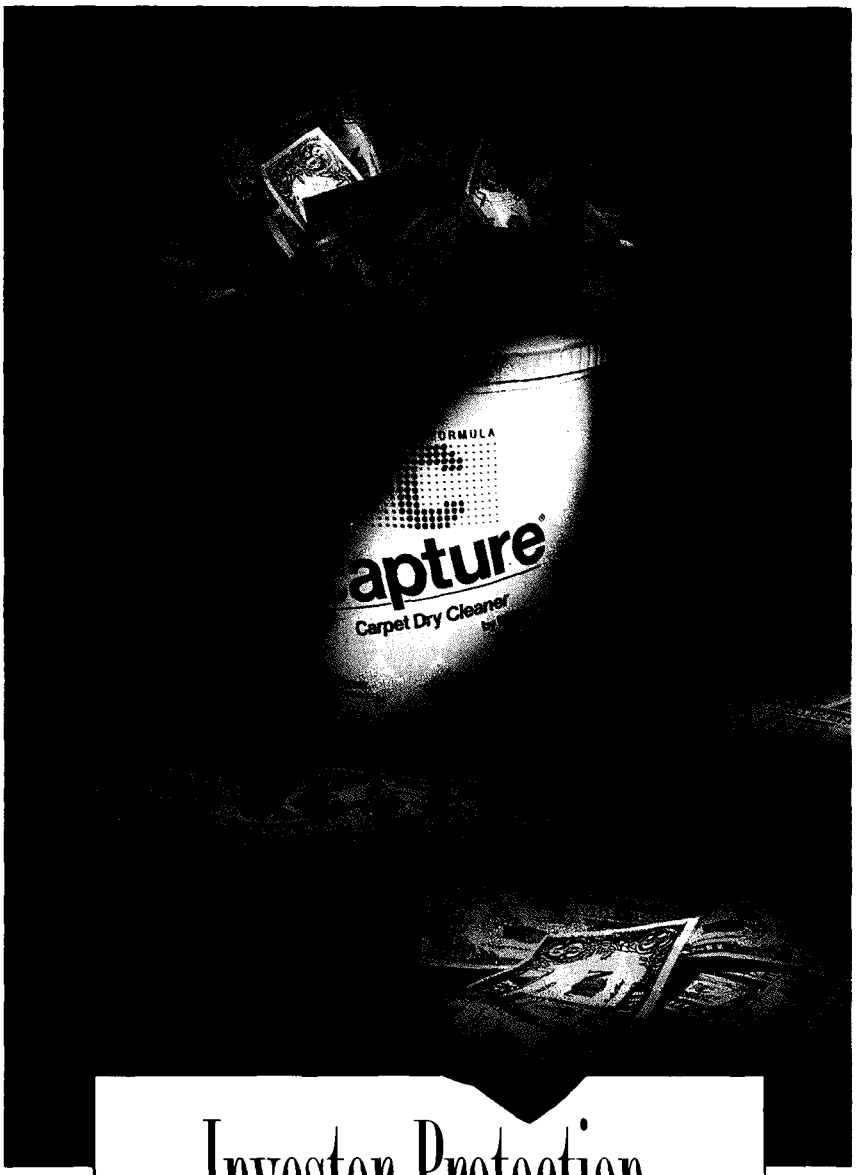

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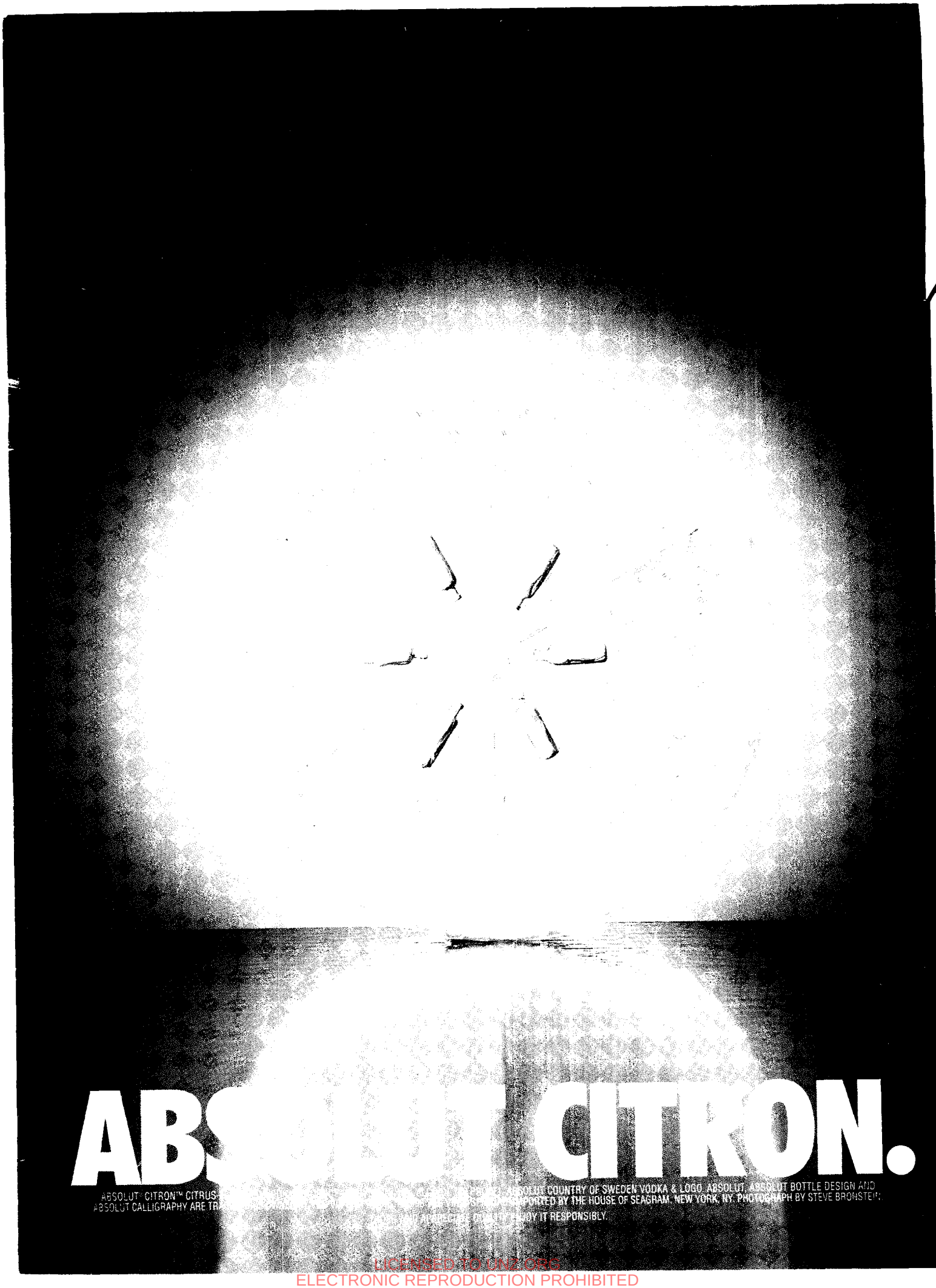
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